Robert C. Haupt

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2023 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/worksofmartinlut0iiiintr

WORKS OF MARTIN LUTHER

WORKS OF MARTIN LUTHER

WITH

INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES

VOLUME III

A. J. HOLMAN COMPANY
AND
THE CASTLE PRESS
PHILADELPHIA: PENNSYLVANIA

48929

Copyright, 1930, by
A. J. Holman Company

CONTENTS

	PAGE
AN ARGUMENT IN DEFENSE OF ALL THE ARTICLES OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER WRONGLY CONDEMNED IN THE ROMAN BULL (1521)	5
Introduction (C. M. Jacobs)	7
Translation (C. M. Jacobs)	11
THE MAGNIFICAT (1520-1)	117
Introduction (A. T. W. Steinhaeuser)	119
Translation (A. T. W. Steinhaeuser)	123
AN EARNEST EXHORTATION FOR ALL CHRISTIANS, WARNING THEM AGAINST INSURRECTION AND REBELLION (1522)	201
Introduction (W. A. Lambert)	203
Translation (W. A. Lambert)	206
SECULAR AUTHORITY: TO WHAT EXTENT IT SHOULD BE OBEYED (1523)	223
Introduction (J. J. Schindel)	225
Translation (J. J. Schindel)	228
TO THE LEIPZIG GOAT (1521)	275
Introduction (A. Steimle)	277
Translation (A. Steimle)	282
REPLY TO THE ANSWER OF THE LEIPZIG GOAT (1521)	287
Translation (A. Steimle)	289
ANSWER TO THE SUPERCHRISTIAN, SUPERSPIRITUAL, AND SUPERLEARNED BOOK OF GOAT EMSER (1521)	307
Translation (A. Steimle)	310
TO THE KNIGHTS OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER (1523)	403
Introduction (W. A. Lambert)	405
Translation (W. A. Lambert)	410
INDEX—SCRIPTURE REFERENCES	429

CONCORDIA COLLEGE LIBRARY
BRONXVILLE, N. Y. 10708

AN ARGUMENT
IN DEFENSE OF ALL THE ARTICLES
OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER
WRONGLY CONDEMNED
IN THE
ROMAN BULL
1521

(5)

INTRODUCTION

THE work here presented bears the German title, Grund und Ursache aller Artikel D. Martin Luthers so durch römische Bulle unrechtlich verdammt sind. It is one of Luther's four replies to the papal bull against him, which was published in Germany in the autumn of 1520.

Luther's prosecution before the ecclesiastical authorities at Rome may be said to have begun in 1517, when John Tetzel and Albrecht of Mainz forwarded copies of the Ninety-five Theses to Rome to be examined for heresy.[1] Nevertheless, it was three full years before the formal excommunication was finally pronounced. The reason for the delay is to be sought primarily in the ecclesiastical politics of the time. It was thought in the beginning that the matter could be settled within the Augustinian Order, of which Luther was a member, and the General of the Augustinians, Gabriel della Volta, was commissioned[2] to secure Luther's recantation of the objectionable parts of the Theses. The result was the publication by Luther in May, 1518, of an explanation and defence of the Theses,[3] from which it was apparent that Luther was even more heretical than had been supposed. Accordingly, in July, 1518, he was cited to appear at Rome within sixty days and answer the charges made against him.

Before the sixty days had elapsed, however, the status of the case had changed somewhat. The Diet of Augsburg convened in that year, and the papal legate, Cardinal Cajetan,[4] was empowered to secure Luther's recantation, failing in which, he was authorized to excommunicate Luther and his adherents, all and several, and to lay under interdict "all cities, towns, and places into which the said Martin may come."[5] Luther's refusal to recant without a trial and his appeal from the papal legate to a general council of the Church had the approval of the Elector of Saxony,[6] and the

---

[1] See Vol. I, p. 16.

[2] Cf. SMITH, Luther's Correspondence (Philadelphia, 1913), I, No. 75.

[3] Resolutiones disputationum, etc. (Weimar Ed., I, 525 ff.), out of which 13 of the 41 articles condemned in the bull of 1520 are taken (see notes below).

[4] See Vol. I, p. 338, n. 1, and SMITH, Luther's Correspondence, I, p. 102.

[5] Breve of Leo X to Cajetan, SMITH, op. cit., No. 73; Weimar Ed. II, 23.

[6] Documents in the Acta Augustana (Weimar Ed., II, 1 ff.).

attitude which the Estates of the Empire had adopted toward the curia[1] made it inadvisable to push the matter to extremes. The well-meant but futile efforts of Karl von Miltitz in 1519 to settle the question by diplomacy, and to flatter the Elector into deserting his professor, left the whole question still hanging in the air.

Meanwhile the Emperor Maximilian had died, and the curia, fearing the election of Charles, had sought to have the Elector of Saxony announce himself a candidate for the imperial throne. During the negotiations the case against Luther was allowed to rest, but when Charles had been elected Emperor (June 28, 1519), when at the Leipzig Disputation (July 4), Luther had gone farther than even his enemies had ventured to hope, and flatly denied the divine right of the papacy, and when a renewed threat of the interdict had failed to move Frederick of Saxony from his purpose to protect Luther against an unfair trial, the matter was taken up in earnest. In January, 1520, the case was put in the hands of a commission instructed to push it to a speedy issue.

During the early months of 1520 the procedure seems to have dragged, but in March John Eck went to Rome for the double purpose of pressing his claims to a benefice in Ingolstadt and pushing the prosecution against Luther.[2] Eck was the foremost Roman theologian of Germany, and had been Luther's opponent at the Leipzig Disputation. He had previously been active in securing the condemnation of Luther's doctrines by the faculty of the University of Louvain.[3] It is doubtless to his influence that the final decision against Luther is to be ascribed. On the 15th of June the bull was signed by the pope, and its publication in Germany was entrusted to Eck. At the end of September, 1520,[4] the bull was formally published in Germany.

This bull—Exsurge Domine—was not, properly speaking, a bull of excommunication, but an "admonition." It recites forty-one errors which have been found in Luther's writings, and condemns them as "either heretical, or scandalous, or false, or offensive to pious ears, or dangerous to simple minds, or subversive of catholic truth." It calls upon Luther to recant these errors within sixty days on pain of excommunication, and decrees that his writings are to be publicly burned. On the 10th of December Luther burned the bull outside the gates of Wittenberg in the presence of the students of the University, having already allowed the prescribed sixty

[1] Refusal to approve the crusading-tax which the pope desired to lay, ostensibly for war against the Turks (cf. Vol. II, p. 85), and adoption of catalogue of Grievances of the German Nation (St. Louis Ed., XV, 452 ff. Gebhardt, Die Gravamina d. deutschen Nation, pp. 94 ff.).

[2] See Eck's letter of May 3 (Erl. Ed., op. var. arg., iv, 256; excerpts in Smith, Luther's Correspondence, I, No. 253).

[3] Published together with the findings of the Faculty of Cologne, Feb. 20, 1519 (Weimar Ed., VI, 170 ff.).

[4] Sept. 21–29 (Weimar Ed., VI, 578).

days to expire. It was not until January 3, 1521, that the second bull, Decet Romanum Pontificem, launched the curse of Rome upon the stiff-necked heretic.

It was not to be expected that Luther would allow the bull to go without some sort of public answer. As late as October 23, Aleander writes to the pope from Aix-la-Chapelle that he has as yet no certain news of the publication of the bull,[1] but on October 11 Luther informs Spalatin that the bull has reached Wittenberg,[2] and on November 4 he writes, again to Spalatin, "I have published the Latin Antibull, which I send; it is also being printed in German."[3] The "antibull" is the Latin treatise Adversus exsecrabilem Antichristi bullam.[4] It was intended for learned circles and contained a detailed defence of but six of the forty-one articles condemned in the bull. The German edition[5] is really a different work and discusses the first twelve articles at length. His friends were not satisfied, however, with a partial answer. On November 29 he writes to Spalatin, "I will soon take up and defend one by one all the articles condemned by the bull, as you wrote, and as I understand they wish,"[6] and January 16, 1521, he writes again, "I sent some pages of my Latin Assertio before; now I send the whole of it."[7] This treatise is the Assertio omnium articulorum per Bullam Leonis X. novissimam damnatorum,[8] and is Luther's third reply to the bull.

While the Assertio was still in press Luther began the preparation of a German version of it. Spalatin had apparently offered to translate the work, but Luther had preferred to keep it in his own hands, for the reason that Spalatin was too slavish a translator.[9] On January 21 he sent to Spalatin the first pages of the German work, expressing the opinion that it is better than the Latin.[10] On the 6th of March he forwarded the complete work, which had come from the press on the 1st of March. This German version of the Assertio, "smoother and simpler" than the Latin,[11] is the Grund und Ursach aller Artikel, here presented to English readers, the editors believe, for the first time.

---

[1] Smith, Luther's Correspondence, I, No. 318.
[2] Enders, II, 486; Smith, I, No. 303.
[3] Enders, II, 508; Smith, I, No. 328.
[4] Weimar Ed., VI, 595 ff.
[5] Wider die Bullen des Endchrists (Weimar Ed., VI, 613 ff.).
[6] Enders, II, 534; Smith, No. 344. Luther writes a me peti intelligo. It was doubtless the Elector who had expressed the desire.
[7] Enders, III, 73; Smith, No. 378.
[8] Weimar Ed., VII, 94 ff.
[9] Letter of Nov. 29th to Spalatin (Enders, II, 534; Smith, I, No. 344): "Unless you render it much more freely than you have done hitherto, leave that work to me."
[10] Enders, III, 76; Smith, I, No. 382.
[11] Luther to Spalatin, Jan. 16th, 1521 (Enders, III, 73; Smith, I, No. 378).

The text of the treatise is found in Weimar Ed., VII, 308 ff.; Erl. Ed[2]., XXIV, 56; St. Louis Ed., XV, 1476 ff. The translators have followed the text of O. Clemen, Luthers Werke in Auswahl, II, 70 ff., to whose notes they are indebted for many readings of obscure passages. For literature on Luther's excommunication the reader is referred to the biographies, especially Köstlin-Kawerau,[2] I, 350 ff., 365 ff.; Böhmer[3], 72 ff.; Smith, 95 ff.; H. E. Jacobs, 168 ff.; and McGiffert, 181 ff. The full text of the bull is translated in Jacobs, Luther, Appendix I.

CHARLES M. JACOBS.

Lutheran Theological Seminary,
Mount Airy, Philadelphia.

AN ARGUMENT
IN DEFENSE OF ALL THE ARTICLES OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER WRONGLY CONDEMNED IN THE ROMAN BULL

1521

JESUS[1]

To all good Christians
who may read this book or hear it read,
grace and peace from God. Amen.

Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 1:3
Who has illumined so many hearts in these days, and awakened even in the laity a Christian mind, so that throughout the world men are beginning to distinguish rightly between the pretended, hypocritical Church—that is, the clergy—and the true and good Church, hidden hitherto, and covered over for so long time with sacred vestments, outward acts and works, and the like external shows and man-made laws, that we have even been taught at last that we are to get our salvation by payments of money, rather than by faith. His divine goodness cannot and will not any longer allow these abominations and errors to rage in His Church; so we see, and so we may well hope and pray. Amen. Amen.

It is not the smallest of the signs of this His divine goodness, that He has lately made some of these tyrants of the Church so blind, and sent upon them such a perverse spirit Isa. 19:14
that (to their own great shame and to their great and

[1] Cf. Vol. I, p. 25, n. 1.

irretrievable downfall) they have issued a bull in which they have forgotten the very thing by which they have hitherto deceived and befooled the world, namely, a fair outward appearance. For they have condemned such evident truth that wood and stone well nigh cry out against them, and no bull was ever received with such scorn, contempt and derision.

Phil. 1:6 May God, Who hath begun this good work, perfect it according to His mercy and give us grace to know this His grace, to thank Him for it, and to pray earnestly for a blessed outcome of it all, so that poor souls may no longer be so sadly led astray by their deceit and trickery. Amen. Amen.

Wherefore I, Doctor Martin Luther by name, have undertaken, with joyful heart, to prove by Scripture all the articles,[1] for the further instruction and the exposure of the false and pretended Church, so that everyone may be able to protect himself against the blind feints that these tricksters are wont to make. Perhaps even they will some time come to themselves and consent to exchange their hypocrisy for truth, their trickery for serious earnest, their pretensions for proofs. But first I must defend myself against some of the charges they bring against me.

The First Accusation—Impatience

In the first place, I pass by entirely the charge that I am caustic and impatient. I shall not excuse myself for that, for I have not been caustic or impatient in the books that have treated of Christian doctrine, but only in controversies and foolish disputings about the papacy, the indulgences and such like fool's-work, and they have forced me into them. These subjects have neither deserved nor permitted so much discussion, let alone kindly and peaceful words.

The Second Accusation—Presumption

They accuse me of setting myself up all alone to be everybody's teacher. I answer, I have not set myself up, but have preferred at all times to creep into a corner.[2] It

[1] i. e., The articles condemned in the bull as heretical.
[2] Cf. Vol. I, p. 42.

is they who have drawn me out by wile and force, that they might win glory and honor at my expense. Now that the game is going against them, they think me guilty of vainglory. And even if it were true that I had set myself up all alone, that would be no excuse for their conduct. Who knows but that God has called me and raised me up? They ought to fear lest they despise God in me.

Do we not read in the Old Testament that God commonly raised up only one prophet at a time? Moses was alone in the Exodus, Elijah was alone in King Ahab's day, Elisha, after him, was alone, Isaiah was alone in Jerusalem, Hosea alone in Israel, Jeremiah alone in Judæa, Ezekiel alone in Babylon, and so forth. Even though they had many disciples, called "children of the prophets," God never allowed more than one man alone to preach and rebuke the people.

Moreover, God never once made prophets out of the high-priests or others of lofty station; but usually He raised up lowly and despised persons, even at last the shepherd Amos. King David was an exception, but even he came up from lowly rank. Therefore the saints have always had to preach against those in high places —kings, princes, priests, doctors—to rebuke them, to risk their own lives, and sometimes to lose them. In those days, too, the great men gave the holy prophets no other answer than to say, "We are the authorities and men must obey us, not the lowly and despised prophets"; as Jeremiah writes. So they do even now. Everything is wrong that does not please the pope, the bishops and the doctors; we must listen to them, no matter what they say. Jer. 18:18

Under the New Testament, too, have not the true bishops and teachers been rare enough? St Ambrose was alone in his day, after him St Jerome, and then St Augustine. Besides, God chose not many high and great bishops for this work. St Augustine was bishop in a single little city of small reputation, but he accomplished so much more than all the Roman popes, with all their fellow-bishops,

that they cannot hold a candle to him. Then too it is a fact that all the heresies have been started, or at least have been encouraged, by bishops and doctors. Why then shall we trust them now, when they no longer serve the Church and have become temporal lords, if they were so dangerous before, when they were better, more learned, holier and more diligent? We insist on being blind.

I say not that I am a prophet, but I do say that the more they despise me and esteem themselves, the more reason they have to fear that I may be a prophet. God is wonderful in His works and judgments and giveth no heed to rank, numbers, greatness, knowledge or power; as saith Psalm cxxxvi, Alta a longe cognoscit.[1] If I am not a prophet, yet for my own self I am certain that the Word of God is with me and not with them, for I have the Scriptures on my side, and they have only their own doctrine. This gives me courage, so that the more they despise and persecute me, the less I fear them. There were many asses in the world in the days of Balaam, but God spake by none of them save only by Balaam's ass. He saith in the xiii Psalm to these same great ones, "Ye have shamed the doctrine of the poor preacher, because he trusteth in God," as if to say, "Because he is not great and high and mighty, his doctrine must needs be false in your eyes."

Eccles. 19:14

Ps. 138:6

Num. 22:28

Cf. Luke 4:25

Ps. 14:6

The Third Accusation—Novelty

They say also that I propose new doctrines, and it is not to be supposed that everyone else has been so long time in error. That too the ancient prophets had to hear. If antiquity were sufficient proof, the Jews would have had the strongest kind of case against Christ on that ground, for His doctrine was different from any they had heard for a thousand years. The Gentiles, too, would have done right to hold the apostles in contempt, because their ancestors for more than three thousand years held a very different belief. There have been murderers, adulterers and thieves since the beginning of the world, and will be

[1] "The lofty He knoweth afar off."

to the end; does that make these things right? I preach nothing new, but I say that all things Christian have gone to wrack and ruin among those who ought to have held them fast, to wit, the bishops and the doctors; yet I have no doubt that the truth has remained even until now in some hearts, though it were only the hearts of children in their cradles. In Old Testament times the spiritual understanding of the Law remained among some of the common people, though it was lost by the high-priests and the doctors, who ought to have kept it. Thus Jeremiah says that he has found less understanding and justice among the great men than among the laity and common folk. So it is even now: poor peasants and children understand Christ better than pope, bishops, and doctors. Everything is topsy-turvy.

Jer. 5:4

If they will not have it otherwise, well and good; let them make me out a heathen! But what would their answer be, or how should we present our case, if the Turk were to ask us to prove our faith? He cares nothing how long we have believed thus and so, nor how many and how great the people are that have believed this way or that. We should have to be silent about all these things, and point him to the Holy Scriptures as our proof. It would be absurd and laughable if we were to say, "Lo so many priests, bishops, kings, princes, lands, and peoples have believed this and that ever so long."

Let them now treat me the same way. Let us see where is our foundation and our precedent. Let us examine it, if only to strengthen and edify ourselves. Shall we have so great a foundation and not know it? Shall we keep it hidden, when it is the will of Christ that it shall be common property and known of all men, as He says in Matthew v, "No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, but on the candle-stick, that it may give light to all those that are in the house"? Christ allowed His hands, His feet, His side to be touched, that His disciples might be sure that it was He Himself; why, then,

Matt. 5:15

John 20:27

should we not touch and prove the Scriptures, which are in truth the spiritual body of Christ, in order to be certain whether it is they in which we believe or not? For all other writings are perilous. They may be "spirits of the air,"[1] which have not flesh and bone, as Christ has.

Luke 24:39

The Scriptures Inerrant

This is my answer to those also who accuse me of rejecting all the teachers of the Church. I do not reject them; but because everyone knows that they have erred at times, as men will, I am willing to put confidence in them only so far as they give me proofs for their opinions out of the Scriptures, which never yet have erred. This St Paul commands me in I Thessalonians, the last chapter, where he says, "First prove and confirm all doctrines; hold fast that which is good." St Augustine writes to St Jerome[2] to the same effect: "I have learned to do only those books that are called the Holy Scriptures the honor of believing firmly that none of their writers has erred; all others I so read as not to hold what they say to be the truth, unless they prove it to me by the Holy Scriptures or by clear reason."

1 Thess. 5:21

The Scriptures Clear

The Holy Scriptures must needs be clearer, easier of interpretation and more certain than any other scriptures, for all teachers prove their statements by them, as by clearer and more stable writings, and wish their own writings to be established and explained by them. But no one can ever prove a dark saying by one that is still darker; therefore, necessity compels us to run to the Bible with all the writings of the doctors, and thence to get our verdict and judgment upon them; for Scripture alone is the true over-lord and master of all writings and doctrines on earth. If not, what are the Scriptures good for? Let us reject them and be satisfied with the books of men and human teachers.

That many of the great hate me and persecute me on this account, frightens me not at all; indeed, it comforts

[1] Fliegende Geister. Cf. Eph. 2:2.
[2] Ep. 82 (Migne, xxxiii, 286). Luther's rendering of the passge is very free.

and strengthens me, since it is clearly the case in all the Scriptures that the persecutors and haters have usually been wrong and the persecuted have usually been right. The lie has always had the majority, the truth the minority on its side. Nay, if it were only a few insignificant men who were attacking me, I should know that what I wrote and taught was not yet of God. St Paul raised much disturbance with his doctrine, as we read in Acts; but that did not prove the falsity of his doctrine. Truth has always caused an uproar; false teachers have always said, "Peace, peace," as Isaiah[1] and Jeremiah tell us.

Acts 19:28 ff.

Jer. 6:14; 8:11

Therefore, the pope and his great following notwithstanding, I will joyfully come to the rescue and defence of the articles condemned in the bull, as God gives me grace. I trust, by God's grace, to uphold them against the wrong that is done them; against force I have nothing else to oppose than one poor body;[2] that I commend to God and His truth, which is still holy, though it has been condemned by the pope. Amen.

THE FIRST ARTICLE

It is heresy to hold that the sacraments give grace to all who do not oppose an obstacle.[3]

To understand this article it should be noted that my opponents have taught that the holy sacraments give grace to everyone, even though he be not repentant for sin and have no intention to do good; it is enough that he do not "oppose an obstacle," that is, that he be without a wanton intention to commit sin. Against this doctrine I have set, and continue to set, this article, and say that it is unchristian, misleading and heretical; for beside the removal of the obstacle, that is, the evil intention, the reception of the sacraments not only requires genuine repent-

Faith Necessary for the Worthy Reception of the Sacraments

[1] The reference is to Ezekiel 13:10, 16; cf. Vol. I, p. 38.
[2] Cf. Vol. I, p. 43.
[3] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 544).

ance for sin, but the worthy reception of the sacraments also requires that there be a firm faith within the heart.

Matt. 9:2 This is proved by Christ in Matthew ix, when He heals the paralytic man. He first said to him, "Believe,[1] my son, and thy sins are forgiven thee." If faith had not been necessary for the forgiveness of his sins, why should Christ have demanded it? Again, we read that Christ did no signs, nor ever helped any one, unless it was believed that Matt. 13:58 He could and would do it, as St John also writes, "In His own country He could do no signs because of their unbelief."

Mark 11:24 Again, when in Mark xi He teaches His disciples to pray, He says, "When ye pray, believe that ye shall receive, and ye shall surely have it." But what is it to receive the sacraments except to have a desire for divine grace? And what is the desire for divine grace except a true and heartfelt prayer? How, then, can it be anything else than unchristian to teach that the sacraments and God's grace are to be received without such a desire, without faith, nay, without repentance for sin, without any intention to do good? Is it not pitiful to hear such teachings in the Church? But because this article stands at the head of the list, and all the others depend upon it, we must establish it and explain it still further, if that will do any good.

Jas. 1:5 ff. St James says, "If any man lack wisdom let him seek and ask it of God, Who giveth to every man abundantly, and it shall be given him. But let him ask with a firm faith, and not doubt. For if he doubteth he is like a wave or billow of the sea, which is driven hither and thither by the wind. Let not that man think that he will receive anything of God. Such a man is unstable in all his ways, because he has a divided heart."

Does not that say clearly enough that the man who prays and does not firmly believe that he will receive his request, cannot receive anything from God? How much less can he receive anything who does not pray, does not

[1] Vulgate, Confide, which may be rendered as here.

believe, does not repent, has no intention to do good, but only removes the obstacle of an evil purpose, as they teach! God keep all His Christians against such an unchristian error, taught by this deceitful bull and masters of the same sort! Its like was never heard since the beginning of the world.

Again, St Paul says, in Romans xiv, "Everything that is not done in faith, is sin." How, then, can the sacraments give grace to unbelievers, who in all their works and ways do nothing else than sin, so long as they do not believe? Nay, how can they "remove the obstacle," if they remain in that unbelief, because of which all that they do is sin, as St Paul here says? Yet they teach that faith is not necessary for the reception of the sacraments and of grace, and condemn these clear passages of Scripture when they condemn me. Rom. 14:28

In the same sense St Paul, in Romans i and Hebrews x, quotes the saying of the prophet Habakkuk as one of the chief things in all Christian doctrine, when he says, Justus ex fide sua vivat, "A righteous man shall live by his faith." He does not say, "A righteous man shall live by the sacraments," but "by his faith," for it is not the sacraments, but faith in the sacraments, that gives life and righteousness. Many men receive the sacraments and get from them neither life nor righteousness; but he that believeth is good and liveth. Rom. 1:17 Heb. 10:38 Hab. 2:4

That is also the meaning of Christ's saying, in the last chapter of Mark, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." He puts the faith before the baptism, for where there is no faith the baptism does no good; as He Himself afterwards says, "He that believeth not shall be lost," even though he is baptised, for it is not the baptism, but faith in the baptism, that saves. Therefore, we read in Acts viii that St Philip would not baptise the eunuch without first asking him whether he believed. And thus we still see it done every day. Wherever in the whole world baptism is administered, the question is first put to Mark 16:16 Acts 8:36 f.

the child, or to the sponsors in his stead, whether he believes, and on their faith and confession, the sacrament of baptism is given him. Why, then, does this heretical, blasphemous bull presume to teach against all Scripture, against the whole world, against the faith and practice of all Christians, that one need not believe, nor repent, nor intend to do good? It is so plainly unchristian, that if it were not for the bull no one would believe that anybody held such a senseless doctrine. I hope they will be heartily ashamed of this bull. They would not like to have the laity read it in German.

Rom. 10:10 Furthermore, St Paul says in Romans x, that for a man to become righteous, it is necessary that he believe from the heart. He does not say it is necessary that he receive the sacraments, for a man can become righteous by faith without bodily reception of the sacraments, so long as he does not despise them; but without faith no sacrament is of any use, nay, it is altogether deadly and pernicious.

Faith More Necessary than the Sacraments

Rom. 4:3 For this reason he writes in Romans iv, that Abraham believed, or trusted, God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, or goodness; as Moses also had written in Gen. 15:6 Genesis xv. This was written in order that we might know that nothing makes us good and righteous except faith, without which no one can have any dealings with God, no one receive His grace.

All this is also proved by the reason and experience of all men, for when we are dealing with words and promises, there must be faith, even between men here on earth. No business and no community could long exist if no one was willing to take another's word or signature on faith. Now, as we plainly see, God deals with us in no other way than by His holy Word and the sacraments, which are like signs or seals of His Word.[1] The very first thing necessary, then, is faith in these words and signs; for when God speaks and gives signs man must firmly and whole-heartedly be-

The Sacrament a Sign

[1] Cf. Vol. I, pp. 57, 306; Vol. II, pp. 11, 197.

lieve that what He says and signifies is true, so that we do not consider Him a liar or a trickster, but hold Him to be faithful and true. This faith pleases God above all things, and does Him the highest honor, because it believes Him to be true, and a righteous God. Therefore He, in turn, counts this faith to us as righteousness good and sufficient unto salvation.

Therefore, since every sacrament contains a divine word and promise, in which God offers and promises us His grace, it is assuredly not enough to "put away the obstacle," as they call it, but there must be in the heart an unwavering, unshaken faith, which receives the promise and sign, and doubts not that what God there promises and signifies is so. Then that grace which the sign, or sacrament, promises and indicates is certainly given to faith. If faith is not present, then the "putting away of the obstacle" is labor lost; and not only so, but God is utterly blasphemed and dishonored, as though He were a liar and foolish jester. In such case the sacraments not only give no grace to those who "put away the obstacle," but they bestow disgrace, wrath and misfortune, so that it is better, if faith is not present, to stay far away from the words and signs, or sacraments, of God.

Baptism and Faith

Thus the sacrament of baptism is a divine sign or seal, given by virtue of the promise and word of Christ in the last chapter of Mark, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." Therefore, he that is baptised must hold this word to be true, and must believe that he will certainly be saved if he is baptised, as the word says and the sign signifies; but if he does not believe, then this word and sign of God are in vain, and God is despised in the sacrament. For unbelief makes Him out a fool and a liar. So grievous, unchristian, horrible, terrible a sin is unbelief, or mistrust, in the sacraments. To such wickedness this blasphemous, damnable bull would drive us. It makes faith a heresy, and blasphemy a Christian truth. God keep us from the abomination standing in the holy place!

Mark 16:16

Matt. 24:15

Penance Matt. 16:19

So also the divine sign, or sacrament, of penance[1] is given in virtue of Christ's word in Matthew xvi, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven, etc." Therefore, he that goes to confession and does penance must see to it, before all else, that he hold this word to be the truth and firmly believe that he is "loosed" before God in heaven when he is absolved on earth. If he does not believe this, then God must seem to him a liar, and by this unbelief, or doubt, he denies Him. Of what help, then, is his "putting away of the obstacle," his laying aside of evil intention, if he keeps the greatest obstacle, the worst intention, that is, unbelief, doubt, and the denying of God?

The Lord's Supper Matt. 26:26

It is the same with the sacrament of the altar. Because it is given in virtue of Christ's words in Matthew xxvi, "Take and eat, this is My body which is given for you," therefore he that goes to the sacrament must firmly believe that what the words of Christ say is really true—that His body is given for him, and His blood shed for him. If he does not believe this, or believes that it is given not for him but for others, again Christ is a liar and His word and sign come to naught. O the countless, abominable sins that are committed these days by this unbelief and abuse of the sacraments, because faith like this is nowhere taught! And now it is condemned by this bull! We are taught only to "put away the obstacle," to repent and confess. If they preach about faith, the preaching goes no farther than to say that Christ is truly present and that bread is not present, but only the form of bread; but what Christ is doing there, or why He is there, of that we hear no one preaching or teaching rightly.

From all this I think it is clear that for the sacrament faith is necessary—faith which does not doubt that it receives everything the words declare and the sacrament signifies. Their talk about the "putting away of the ob-

[1] Luther still seems to attach sacramental value to confession and absolution, though he has previously denied it. Cf. The Babylonian Captivity, Vol. II, pp. 291 f.

stacle" is profitless; nay, it is heretical to say that with the mere "putting away of the obstacle," without faith, grace is given by the sacraments. This saying, taken from the teaching of St Augustine,[1] holds true, "Not the sacrament, but the faith of the sacrament makes righteous and saves"; and again, the same St Augustine, in his commentary on John,[2] says of baptism, "The word comes to the element, and there is a sacrament," and again, "The water touches the body, but purifies the soul, not because of the work, or of the pouring, but because of faith."

Against these strong arguments in behalf of this Christian article my opponents have not a tittle of Scripture or a spark of reason for their opinion about the "putting away of obstacles," but the whole thing is a naked, baseless human fabrication, a dream. I would gladly hear their refutation. Is it not a pity, even if it were not heresy, that they dare to teach doctrines of their own devising in the Church, where nothing should be taught except God's Word?

The Argument for the Roman Doctrine

They have one lone argument with which they support their opinion. It is as follows: "If the sacraments of the New Testament do not give grace to those who 'put away the obstacle,' even though they have not faith, then there would be no difference between them and the sacraments of the Old Testament; for the Old Testament sacraments had the power to give grace to those who believed, and the New Testament sacraments must be more powerful and better than the Old; therefore they must give grace to those also who do not yet believe, to whom the Old Testament sacraments did not give grace." This is a broad subject and much could be said about it. To put it briefly, their whole argument rests on a false and erroneous idea, for there is no difference between the sacraments of the Old and New Testaments. Neither the one nor the other

[1] From the Commentary on the Gospel of John (Migne, XXIV, 1840).
[2] Ibid.

confers the grace of God, but, as has been said, it is nothing else than faith in God's word and signs which gave grace then and gives it now. Therefore, the ancients obtained grace through the very same faith as we. Thus St Peter says in Acts xv, "We trust that we shall be saved through faith, like all our fathers"; and St. Paul in II Corinthians iv, "We have the same spirit of faith, which they had"; and in I Corinthians x, "Our fathers ate the same spiritual meat and drank the same spiritual drink that we eat and drink," that is to say, they believed, as we do.

Acts 15:11
2 Cor. 4:13
1 Cor. 10:3 f.

The Types of the Old Testament

It is indeed true that the types of the Old Testament gave no grace, but the types are not sacraments, as they think. For in the types there is no word or promise of God, as there must be if there is to be a sacrament, but they were merely figures or signs, such as we have now. Bodily adornments and trappings are a mere figure or sign in which there is no word or promise from God that he who has it shall have this or that gift. They contain no such promise as we see in baptism, that he shall be saved who believes and is baptised. Whatever like promises of God, in which men believed, were given in the Old Testament, they were in all respects equal to our sacraments, except that they had many of them and many kinds of them, while we have few of them, and all of one kind, and they are the common property of all men in the whole world.

On the other hand, the types and signs we have, which are not sacraments and are not accompanied by a word of God, are like the Old Testament types. So, for instance, a bishop's dress is just as much a type as was the dress of Aaron; neither bestows any grace. Therefore they ought not to confuse the sacraments and the types, and mistake the one for the other; then they would not have fallen into the error of making a distinction between the sacraments of the Old and of the New Testaments, when they cannot make a distinction between the Old and the New Testament faith.

If this article is thoroughly grasped and understood, all the rest will easily be understood, and the whole bull will be put to open shame; for this is by far the most important article, because it has to do with faith.

THE SECOND ARTICLE

He who denies that after baptism sin remains in every child, tramples upon Christ and St Paul.[1]

St Paul says in Romans vii, "I had not known that evil lust and desire was sin, except God's commandment had said, 'Thou shalt not have evil desire.'"[2] Now the Apostle was not only a baptised man, but was also a saint, when he wrote this about his own evil desire and that of all the saints. Whence did this evil desire come to him after baptism? It was nothing else than a remnant. Rom. 7:7

Again, in Galatians v, he writes to baptised men and saints as follows: "The flesh desires and lusts against the spirit and the spirit lusts against the flesh; these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the thing that ye would." What can or will anyone say in reply to this clear passage? It says plainly that they have within them flesh and spirit, two contradictory desires, or lusts, so deep-rooted that although they would wish to be without fleshly desire, it is impossible. Whence comes this evil lust in men who are baptised and saints? Without doubt from the fleshly birth, in which this inherited sin of evil desire is born with them; and it continues even unto death, and offers battle and resistance to our spirit as long as we live.[3] Gal. 5:17 Original Sin

So too in Romans vii, "I find in me, that is, in my flesh, no good thing; for the evil that I would not, that I do, but Rom. 7:18 f.

---

[1] From the Explanation of the Articles Discussed at Leipzig, of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 410).
[2] From the Vulgate, Non concupisces.
[3] Cf. Treatise on Baptism (Vol. I, pp. 56 ff.), passim.

the good that I would, I do not." What does St Paul mean by that except that although, according to the spirit, he would like to do good—that is, to be without evil desires and inclinations—nevertheless the flesh is so evil and full of lusts, that he does it not, and cannot be without these lusts, and therefore he does the evil of his flesh, which according to his spirit he does not wish to do? That is to say, he has evil desires, though he fights against them that they may not get the better of him and be fulfilled in works,

Rom. 6:12 as he also teaches others to do, in Romans vi, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, so that ye follow its lusts or desires," as if to say, "Sin and evil lust are in your body; but see to it that ye subdue them, and consent not to them, nor follow after them."

The Conflict of Flesh and Spirit

Gen. 3:15 This conflict of our flesh and spirit, with their contradictory desires, God lays upon all whom He causes to be baptised and called, as it is prophesied in Genesis iii, when He says to the serpent, "I will make enmity between thee and a woman, and between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her foot."[1] That is to say, "Spirit and flesh strive against one another, but the spirit shall overcome, though with trouble and labor, and shall put down the disobedient flesh," as

Gal. 5:24 Paul says in Galatians v, "All who are Christians, or belong to Christ, crucify the flesh, with its lusts and vices"; and

1 Pet. 2:11 St Peter, "Beloved brethren, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war continually against the soul."

It is evident from this that sin remains in the baptised and the saints so long as they have flesh and blood and live on earth, and that the condemnation of this article in this bull is most unchristian. But to prove it still farther,

Rom. 7:22 f. St Paul says in Romans vii, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another, contradictory law, in my members, which would take me captive in the law, or power, of sin, and which wars against the law of my spirit." Here St Paul confesses that he finds a good law

[1] Vulgate.

and will in his spirit, and also an evil law and will in his members. How then can it be denied that sin remains in a saint after he is baptised? If it is not sin that wars against the good spirit and the law of God, then I should like to be told what sin is. Whence comes this strife of the evil against the good within us, if not from the fleshly birth of Adam, which remains after the entrance of the good spirit in baptism and repentance, until, by resistance and the grace of God and the growth of the good spirit, it is overcome, and at last is slain by death and driven out.

Moreover, St Paul says still more and speaks even more plainly in the same passage, "I myself, after the spirit, serve the commandment of God, but after the flesh I serve the law of sin." Does not that make it clear enough that one and the same man finds in himself two things? With the spirit he wills the good and serves the law of God and is righteous, he also takes pleasure and delight in it; but with the rebellious flesh he wills the evil, and takes pleasure and delight in serving it. Therefore, since flesh and spirit are one man, both kinds of nature, work, love and desire are reckoned to him, contradictory though they are. Because of the spirit the man is righteous; because of the flesh he has sin; as St Paul says in Romans vi. The spirit is alive in the sight of God because of its righteousness, but the flesh is dead before Him because of its sin. For because the noblest, best and highest part of man—the spirit—remains by faith righteous and just, God counts not the sin which remains in the lesser part—the flesh—to man's condemnation. Surely I, and everyone else, have a right to be amazed that this article is not held to be the most certain, the best-known, the most evident truth; still more, that anyone should condemn it.

Rom. 7:25

And what do we read in the lives of all the saints? What is it that they confess and prove with all their works, prayers, fastings, labors and manifold exercises, except that by these things they are striving against their own flesh, to chastise it, make it subject to the spirit and quench

its evil lusts and desires? So St Paul writes to the Colos-
Col. 3:5 sians, "Slay your members which are on the earth, unchastity, uncleanness, evil desire, covetousness"; and again
Rom. 8:13 in Romans viii, "If ye through the spirit do slay the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live before God; but if ye live after
1 Cor. the flesh, ye shall die," and to the Philippians, "I chastise
9:27 my body and compel it to service, that I may not preach to others and myself be cast away." And so I might go on. Who of the saints does not sigh, groan, lament and cry out about his own flesh and his evil desires?

How often does St Jerome lament that evil desire rages in his flesh, not only after baptism, but even when he has fasted, watched and labored unto weariness, and is most a saint! St Cyprian,[1] in a sermon on the deadly pestilence, comforts himself by thinking of his sins, and says: "Ceaselessly, and with care and sorrow, we must fight against carnal desires, against the allurements of the world. The spirit of man is compassed about and besieged by the assaults of the devil and can hardly meet, hardly withstand them all. If avarice is overthrown, lust rises; if lust is put down, ambition takes its place; if ambition is despised, then anger grows bitter, pride puffs itself up, drunkenness assails, hatred breaks the bonds of concord, envy destroys friendship. You must curse, though God has forbidden it; you must swear, though it is wrong. So many persecutions must the spirit of man endure, so many perils must the heart expect; and shall we still be glad to abide here long among the devil's swords? We should far rather long and pray that sudden death may help us haste to Christ."

Since, therefore, the lives and confessions of these and all the other saints prove the saying of St Paul in Romans
Rom. 7:22 vii, "I delight in the law of God after my spirit, yet find in my members a contrary law of sin," so that no one can deny that sin is still present in all the baptised and holy

[1] Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (248–258). The reference is to his de mortalitate, c. 4, 5 (Migne, iv, 585).

men on earth, and that they must fight against it; then what does this miserable bull mean by condemning all that? Are the Scriptures and all the saints to be liars? Let anyone try it for himself, and find out! Let him fast, watch, labor, even unto death, and be as holy as ever he can! Then let him say whether he will not still find in himself evil desires and inclinations toward unchastity, wrath, hatred, pride or the like. For it is not unchastity alone, but all evil lusts and desires which the flesh can serve, that are comprised in the "desires of the flesh," as Paul tells us in Galatians v. Gal. 5:18 ff.

I go so far as to say that by condemning this article, the bull accuses God of lying, and blasphemes Him; for thus saith John the Apostle in I John i, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; if we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us." Is it not clear enough from this passage that we are still to be cleansed and still have sin? In like manner St Paul says to the Hebrews, "Let us lay aside every weight and the clinging sin." Here the Apostle includes himself, and confesses that there is in him not only sin, but "clinging sin," that is, the wilful, evil lust, that does not cease so long as we live, but always besets us, and wars against the spirit, putting upon it a burden and a weight, both of which the apostle commands us to lay aside. 1 John 1:8 Heb. 12:1

Again, in John xiii, Christ said to His disciples, "Ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you," but says afterwards, in the xv chapter, "I am a vine, ye are My branches, and My Father a husbandman; the branch that beareth fruit, He will purify it that it bear more fruit." Here we see that the branches that are fruitful—that is, righteous and holy—are still impure, and are to be further purified. So David, in Psalm l, though he was already righteous and pure, said, "O Lord, John 15:3 John 15:5 Ps. 51:10

create in me a clean heart, and make a new, right spirit
Ps. 19:12 within me," and says again, in Psalm xviii, "O Lord, who can know all his sins? Make me pure from my hidden, secret sins."

Let us understand this aright! It is not possible for a man thus to pray against sin and about sin, or to have such a desire as this, unless he is already righteous. It is only the new spirit and the first-imparted grace that works against the sin which remains. It would fain be righteous through and through, but cannot because of the contradiction of the flesh. Those who have not begun to be righteous do not strive nor lament nor pray against their fleshly sin; nay, they feel no contradiction, but go on following the will of the flesh, as St Paul says of them in
Eph. 4:19 Ephesians iv, "They have got so far that they are without feeling, and therefore they give themselves unto impurity and greediness, etc."

Here the parables of the Gospel aid the argument.
Luke 10:34 f. First that of the Samaritan, who laid the half-dead man on his beast, poured wine and oil into his wounds and bade the host take care of him. He did not entirely cure him at once; so we too are not entirely cured by baptism or repentance, but a beginning is made in us and a bandage of the first grace is bound upon us, that our recovery may proceed from day to day until we are entirely cured.
Jas. 1:18 Therefore St James says, in James i, "God hath borne us by His Word, out of pure, gracious will, without our merit, that we may be a beginning of His work, or His creatures"; as if to say, "We are a work that God has begun but not yet completed so long as we live here on earth in the faith of His Word; but after death we shall be perfect, a divine work without sin or fault."

Matt. 13:33 The second parable is in Matthew xiii. It is that of the leaven which the woman mixes in three measures of meal until it is leavened through and through. The new leaven is the faith and grace of the Spirit, Who does not leaven the whole lump through at once, but gently and slowly

makes us altogether like Himself, new bread of God. This life, therefore, is not righteousness but growth in righteousness,[1] not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise; we are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished, but it is going on; this is not the end, but it is the road; all does not yet gleam with glory, but all is being purified. 2 Cor. 3:18

To bring the matter to a conclusion! The Lord's Prayer alone is enough to prove that all of us are still in sin, for all the saints must pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come," etc., whereby they actually confess that they do not yet sufficiently hallow God's name; and yet they could not offer this prayer if the spirit had not already begun to hallow this name. So also they confess that they do not yet do the will of God, and yet they could not pray thus unless they had already begun to do His will; for those who have not made a beginning care nothing about the name and will of God, do not pray about them and have no interest in them. Nor can it be said that in these petitions the saints pray over their past sins only, and not over the sin that remains and is present, for there is a special petition in the Lord's Prayer about past sins; it is, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." These other petitions, however, plainly refer to the sin that remains and is present, because they pray for future honoring of God's name, for future obedience to the divine will, for future possession of the divine kingdom. They are the prayers of men who are as yet partly in the kingdom of the devil, partly disobedient, and partly guilty of dishonoring the name of God. Matt. 6:9 f.

I know full well what they are wont to say to all this. They say that this evil which remains after baptism is not sin, and they invent a new name for it, saying that it is penalty, and not guilt, that it is a defect or a weakness,[2]

[1] Nit ein frumkeit, sondern ein frumb werden; Latin (Weimar Ed., VII, 107), Non justitia sed justificatio.

[2] German, Feyl oder gebreche; Latin (Weimar Ed., VII, 108), defectum seu infirmitas.

rather than sin. I answer, They say all that out of their own arbitrary will, without warrant of Scripture. Nay, it
Rom. 7:25 is contrary to Scripture, for St Paul does not say, "I find in me a defect," but expressly, "I serve after the flesh the law of sin," and again, "The sin that dwelleth in me
1 John 1:10 doeth the evil"; and St John says not, "If we say that we have no defect," but "If we say that we have no sin."

The Remnant of Sin Really Sin

It is not to be endured that human audacity should wrest God's Word and call "defect" what God bids us call "sin." Otherwise the whole Scriptures might be weakened by saying that wherever the word "sin" occurs, it means "defect," and that nothing is sin any more, but merely a defect or a weakness. Who would then prevent someone from saying that adultery, murder and theft were only defects and weaknesses, but not sin? To be sure, they are defects and weaknesses, but they are sinful defects and weaknesses, which must be cured by grace. Wrath, evil lust and inclination to all sorts of evil are defects, but are they not also sins? Are they not against God's commandments, Who hath said, "Thou shalt not
Matt. 5:22 have evil desires," "Thou shalt not be angry"? What will they call sin, if not that which is against God's commandments? Indeed, St Paul brought God's commandments into the very text in which he speaks of the sin of
Rom. 7:7 those who are baptised, saying, "I had not known that evil desire was sin, if the commandment had not said, Thou shalt not have evil desire";[1] as if to say, "this desire, which remains in me and in all who are baptised, is not simply a defect, but is the sin that is contrary to this command of God and is forbidden by it.

These wiles and evasions for the distorting of the Scrip-
Eph. 4:14 tures St Paul, in Ephesians iv, calls in Greek k y b i a and p a n u r g i a,[2] that is, "sleight of hand," "jugglers' tricks," "gamesters' tricks," because they toss the words of God to and fro, as the gamesters throw their dice; and

[1] Cf. above, p. 25, n. 2.
[2] "The sleight of men and cunning craftiness" (A. V.).

because, like the jugglers who give things new noses and change the whole appearance of them, they take from the Scriptures their single, simple, constant sense, and blind our eyes, so that we waver to and fro, hold fast to no sure interpretation, and are like men whom they have bewitched or tricked, while they play with us as gamblers with their dice. It is thus that they deal with this clear text, and with the little word "sin." They say it does not mean sin, but defect or weakness, and they play their jugglers' tricks on us until we do not see what is plainly before our eyes, just as he writes to the Galatians, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you and tricked you, that ye hear not the truth?" Gal. 3:1

If we allowed them the right to distort God's words in this fashion, they might say at last that a tree was a stone, and a horse a cow. Sad to say, they have already done this, and still are doing it, as regards the words "faith," "love," "hope," "righteousness," "good works," "sin," "law," "grace of God," and many others. I will maintain on my oath, and prove it too, that the men who in the last four hundred years have written on the Sentences[1] have never yet understood these words, but in their ignorance have played with them and juggled with them until the meaning of all the Scriptures has been lost, and in its place we have been taught nothing but fables and fairy-tales. Let no man's presumptuous inventions lead anyone astray. When God expressly calls anything sin, we ought to take His word, and believe that it is truly sin. God does not lie, as a man does, neither does he play and juggle with words, as do men, but His words are faithfulness and truth. Num. 23:19 Ps. 119:86; 111:7

What tricks would they not have played with the Scriptures if the apostle had quoted from the First Table of Moses one of the great commandments against idolatry, which even the noblest spirits do not sufficiently under-

[1] The text-books in theology were chiefly commentaries on the famous work of Peter Lombard, known as the Sentences.

stand, when they insist on juggling with this lower commandment[1] against evil desires? Everyone perceives that evil desires are against God's commandment, and yet they are not willing that sin shall be sin. Without doubt St Paul cited this lesser commandment in order that he might stop every mouth, and conquer us and convince us by our own perception, so that no one could say anything to the contrary. But it has all been in vain; they continue to resist plain truth and their own experience.

They say it would be an insult to baptism if one were to say that sin remained, because we believe that in baptism all sins are forgiven, and man is born again, pure and new; but if all sins are forgiven, then that which remains is not sin. This is the way human reason works when without divine illumination it interferes with God's words and works and tries to estimate and measure them according to its own ability.

What answer should I make to this argument except the answer that St Augustine gave to his Pelagians, who tried to spit him also on their spears of straw? "Certain sins," he says,[2] "such as actual sins, pass away as works, but remain as guilt, for a murder is quickly done and over with, but the guilt remains until the murderer repents. On the other hand, this original sin, which is born in the flesh, passes away in baptism as guilt, but remains as a work; for although it is forgiven, nevertheless it lives and works and raves and assails us until the body dies, and only then is it destroyed."

I would not believe St Augustine if St Paul did not sup-
Rom. 8:1 port him, saying in Romans viii, "Those who believe in Christ have nothing damnable in them, because they do
Rom. 7:14 ff. not obey the flesh." He says not "They have nothing sinful in them," but "nothing damnable," for he has

[1] For Luther's view of the relative importance of the commandments of the decalogue, see the Treatise on Good Works, Vol. I, pp. 187 ff.

[2] From de nuptiis et concupiscentia (Migne, xliv, 430) and contra Julianum (ibid., 852).

previously said that in the members and the flesh there is sin which wars against the spirit; but because the spirit fights against it and does not obey it, it does no harm, and God judges a man not according to the sin which assails him in the flesh, but according to the spirit which wars against the sin, and is thereby like the will of God, which hates and fights against sin. It is one thing, then, to say that sins are forgiven, and another thing to say that there is no sin present. After baptism and repentance all sins are forgiven, but sin is still present until death, although because of the forgiveness it does not prevent salvation, provided we strive against it and do not obey it. Therefore they ought not to deny that sin remains after baptism, as though we needed no more grace to drive out sin; they ought rather to deny that not all sins are forgiven. Then they and I would be right heartily at one in our denial.

For this is the rich grace of the New Testament and the surpassing mercy of the heavenly Father, that through baptism and repentance we begin to become righteous and pure, and whatever of sin is still to be driven out He does not hold against us, because of the beginning we have made in righteousness and because of our continual striving against and driving out of sin. He will not lay this sin to our account, though He might justly do so, until we become perfectly pure. Therefore He has given us a Bishop, even Christ, Who is without sin, and Who is to be our representative until we too become, like Him, all pure. Meanwhile the righteousness of Christ must be the mantle which hides our shame from the eyes of God; His perfect righteousness must be our shield and defence, so that for His sake the sin that remains in those who believe in Him may not be reckoned against them, as St Paul so excellently puts it in Romans iii. Rom. 3:24 ff.

We will, therefore, conclude the discussion of this article —almost the best and most necessary of them all—with the beautiful saying of St Augustine,[1] "Sin is forgiven in

[1] Migne, xliv, 430 and 852.

baptism; not that it is no longer present, but it is not imputed." Here we see plainly that sin remains, but it is not imputed; and that for the two reasons mentioned above, —first, Because we believe in Christ, Who through faith becomes our representative and covers our sin with His innocence; second, Because we strive unceasingly against sin, to destroy it. Where these two reasons are not present sin is imputed, is not forgiven, and condemns us eternally. This is the joy, the comfort, the blessedness and salvation of the New Testament. Herein we learn the benefit Christ has for us and why we need Him. Out of this root spring joy and delight in Christ, praise and thanksgiving to Him and to the Father of all mercy. This makes free, glad, brave Christians, whose love causes them to fight against sin, and who take pleasure in repentance. But those who would hide our sin from us and make it out to be only a weakness, lull us into false security, make us slothful and grudging, take Christ from us by stealth, and allow us to go on without fear and without being careful to destroy our sin. Thus they harden us in such abominable presumption that neither Christ nor God is sweet and dear to us. God keep us from this presumption, and help out of it all who are in this state! Amen.

THE THIRD ARTICLE

The tinder of original sin,[1] even without actual sin, hinders the soul from entrance into the kingdom of heaven.[2]

The sin remaining after baptism, of which we spoke in the preceding article, is called "tinder" because, as every one observes in his own case, it is easily inflamed and

[1] Fomes peccati, the remnant of original sin which remains after baptism. It is concupiscence that has been baptised and, therefore, is not regarded as really sin, but only as "tinder," which may easily be inflamed to sin. For the official definition, see Decrees of the Council of Trent, Sess. 5, 5 (DENZINGER, Enchiridion, 674).

[2] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 572).

moved to evil love, lust and works, as tinder easily takes fire. Now hitherto I have never held this article except as an opinion and belief, not as a settled and certain truth that ought to be taught. It was not necessary, therefore, to condemn it. But since my opponents bring forward nothing to the contrary except the single word "We do not like it,"[1] and I care not what they like or do not like, and since, moreover, I have given the matter more thought meanwhile, I now assert it as a settled and true doctrine, confess it, and will maintain it, defying them to overthrow it with Scripture or with reason. My proof follows.

St Peter says, in the last chapter of II Peter, that at the last day God will create a new heaven and a new earth, in which no sin shall dwell, as in this world, but only righteousness. Because, then, it has been proved in the preceding article that the "tinder" is sin, it is evident to any reasoning man that no one will enter heaven unless this sin has first been laid aside. Certainly they will not take sin with them into heaven. But although this truth is so evident that there is no need to prove it—since no one is so foolish as to hold that a man can enter heaven with his sins—nevertheless, because this bull is so mad, and they are so foolish or so shameless as to say such a thing and formally assert it, I will cite another passage. 2 Pet. 3:13

St Paul says, in Ephesians v, "Christ purifieth His Church through the baptism of water and the Gospel, that He may lead home a bride, the glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." I think St Paul here teaches plainly that no sin can go with us to heaven, if no spot nor wrinkle nor any blemish shall enter. Eph. 5:26

Even though the aforesaid "tinder" were, as they mistakenly think, not sin, but only a disease or weakness, yet everyone, I think, knows nevertheless that this weakness also prevents entrance into heaven. For every disease and weakness, all spots, all wrinkles and all such things must first be laid aside, as St Paul says, if we are to enter

[1] Non placet, "disapproved."

Exod. 13:18 into heaven, so that the type in Exodus xiii may be fulfilled, where the children of Israel went out of Egypt not only strong and well, but also "harnessed." Of this David Ps. 105:37 sings in the civ Psalm, "There was not one among them who was sick or feeble." How much the rather must all weakness be put away when we journey into the true promised land of heaven, out of the true Egypt of this world!

But perhaps in this bull the pope and his people are jesting, speaking of the heaven that is prepared in the abyss of hell, with Lucifer and his angels, for him and all his followers, who blaspheme and persecute the truth of God. Into this heaven will enter not only the "tinder," but the fire of all sin and every woe. I cannot think what other kind of heaven he may have, where sin and disease do not bar the entrance. Entrance to our heaven, where God dwells, is prevented by the very smallest sin Matt. 13:43 and weakness, and all who are to enter must "shine pure as the sun," as the Scripture says. Or perhaps the pope and his papists wish to build themselves a heaven of their own, like those the jugglers make on carnival-day out of linen cloth.[1] Is it not disgusting that we have to read such foolish and childish things in papal bulls? And yet they command that these things shall be regarded as serious, Christian articles of faith!

THE FOURTH ARTICLE

A dying man's imperfect love for God brings with it, beyond doubt, great fear, and this of itself might be a purgatory and prevent entrance into heaven.[2]

It has been said, and been proved,[3] that nothing which

[1] The canopy over the stage where the jugglers performed their tricks was known as a "heaven."

[2] From the XCV Theses, No. 14 (Vol. I, p. 31).

[3] In the discussion of the preceding article.

has a weakness can enter heaven; everything must be in its own measure perfect, sinless, and without weakness. Doubtless the saints will not all be equal in heaven, yet each of them will be in his own measure sufficiently pure and perfect. Because, then, imperfect love is a weakness and is sinful in proportion to the greatness of the weakness, I believe it is evident that imperfect love is an obstacle to entrance into heaven.

For the assertion that imperfect love is accompanied by fear, I will let St John be responsible. He says, in I John iv, "Where fear is, love is not perfect, for perfect love driveth out fear." As for the man who does not believe this saying, I do not ask him to believe me; but since this bull condemns it, I should be sorry if it did not also condemn my article, which is founded on this saying of St John. 1 John 4:18

That this great fear can well be a purgatory, I have held as an opinion, not knowing how to prove or to disprove it; we shall learn by our own experience. Besides, our ignorance makes no difference. Nevertheless, I think the Scriptures show that the pains of hell—which all of them make to be the same as purgatory—are fear, terror, horror, the desire for flight, and despair;[1] as Psalm ii says, "He will speak to them in His wrath, and in His displeasure will He terrify them," and the vi Psalm, "All my bones are terrified, and my soul is sore terrified," and Proverbs xxvi, "The sinner fleeth and no man pursueth," and also Deuteronomy xxviii, "God will give thee a fearful, despairing heart." Besides this, we see daily how great a punishment this horrible terror is. To some it causes sudden death, others go mad because of it, and become in a single moment like different beings. We must admit that there is no penalty like a genuine, awful fright. Therefore it is written of the righteous man, in the xci Psalm, "He shall not be afraid of the evil tidings," at which all sinners are terrified. This fear and terror results from nothing else than a bad conscience, which is weak in faith and love. Ps. 2:5 Ps. 6:2 f. Prov. 28:1 Deut. 28:65 Ps. 112:7; cf. 91:5

[1] See the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 556).

Therefore I think this article sufficiently probable, though if anyone does not wish to believe it, he may leave the question open; the bull and all its masters know nothing about it.

THE FIFTH ARTICLE

There is no foundation in Scripture, nor in the holy doctors of ancient times, for the doctrine that penance has three parts,—contrition, confession and satisfaction.[1]

It is to be noted here that I have never denied that God at times punishes sin, as we read of Moses and Aaron and David and many others; but I have said that the satisfaction which the pope pretends to remit by means of indulgences is nothing, and rests on no word of Scripture, but has grown out of the laws of men. This I will prove.

First, By their own words; for they say, correctly, that contrition might possibly be so great that satisfaction would be unnecessary. But if satisfaction were founded on the Scriptures it would be necessary and would have to be rendered, regardless of the greatness of the contrition or the pureness of the confession. For what is commanded in the Scriptures cannot be remitted because of anything else, since Christ says, "Not a jot or tittle shall pass away; it must all be fulfilled." Therefore it is clear from their own words that they are biting their own tongues[2] and condemning their own doctrine.

Matt. 5:18

Second, Christ absolved the adulteress without satisfaction, and forgave the sins of the paralytic also without satisfaction. This Christ would not have done if satisfaction were founded on Scripture, for He says He is not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. But when the example of Christ is against any doctrine, that doctrine

John 8:11
Matt. 9:2
Matt. 5:17

[1] From the Sermon on Indulgence and Grace of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 243). Cf. Vol. I, pp. 18 f.

[2] Equivalent to "cutting off their own noses."

is unquestionably neither clear nor founded on Scripture. It does not help their case to cite to the contrary such an illustration of satisfaction as some find in the instance of Mary Magdalen, who washed Christ's feet with tears; for I might reply, This was not satisfaction, since many works are done and can be done which are not satisfaction. But no remission of satisfaction can be interpreted otherwise than as a remission of satisfaction; hence, if satisfaction is remitted, it is proof that satisfaction is not commanded in the Scriptures; but the mere fact that a work is done is no proof that a satisfaction, or work, is commanded.

Again, if God inflicts a penalty for sin, whether it is satisfaction or not, no one can remit it; as He says in Psalm lxxxviii, "I will visit their sin with rods and with stripes," that is, with penalties inflicted by the hands of men. These words also must be fulfilled to the letter and the tittle, and the pope cannot remit the penalty for sin, because he cannot abolish the Scriptures and God's Word. True, a man may anticipate God's punishment, and lay a penalty, or cause one to be laid, upon himself, in order that God withhold the rod, as St Paul says in I Corinthians xi, "If we punished ourselves, we should not be punished by God." In the same way contrition may be so great that God requires no further penalty.

Ps. 89:32

1 Cor. 11:31

In this manner the holy fathers in ancient times established the canons[1] of repentance for sin. These[2] were called "satisfactions" because they anticipated God's punishments, and we punished ourselves; for sin must be punished either by ourselves or by others who act in God's stead. Therefore I have said,[3] and still say, that the pope's indulgences are nothing but lies and deceit; for if God demands that sin be punished—and this is the truth and the teaching of Scripture—then the pope cannot remit it, and overthrow the Scriptures. Thus he deceives the

[1] The "penitential canons"; see Vol. I, pp. 17, 30, n. 1.
[2] i. e., The works imposed by the canons.
[3] In The Babylonian Captivity, Vol. II, pp. 170 f.

people. But if there is no penalty—as is the case when contrition is great enough or when we inflict the penalty upon ourselves—then he remits nothing; and again he deceives the people.

For these reasons I have said that the three parts of penance are not based on Scripture; not that I reject contrition, confession and penalty, but I hold the indulgences to be of no effect, because they make a false pretence of remitting the third part of penance, namely, the satisfaction, and I have clearly shown that the satisfaction which is remitted, or alleged to be remitted, by the indulgences is nowhere mentioned in Scripture. In so saying I have not denied that there is such a thing as penalty, or satisfaction, for sin. I say that there is such a thing, but that it cannot be remitted. That which is remitted has been devised by men without the authority of Scripture. Therefore I hate the word "satisfaction," and wish it had never come into existence. The Scriptures call it "penalty" and "chastisement" for sin. No one can make satisfaction to God for daily sins, but he can be punished for all his sins, either graciously in this life, or wrathfully to all eternity.

This article, therefore, stands. Penance has not three parts, as the pope and his followers lyingly declare, saying that the third part is in the pope's power and that he can remit it by means of indulgences. But according to God's Holy Scriptures repentance has three parts, the third of which is sometimes in abeyance because of great contrition or of self-punishment; but no sin ever goes unpunished, as St Augustine says,[1] N u l l u m m a l u m i m p u n i t u m (No evil goes unpunished), and the proverb has it, "When man does not punish, God does." Therefore the pope has as little power to remit the penalty of sin as he has to remit contrition or confession; for penance is a sacrament[2] and is not his property, nor can he change it in any part.

[1] Sermon 19 (M i g n e, xxxviii, 133).
[2] See, however, Vol. II, pp. 291 f.

THE SIXTH ARTICLE

The contrition that is produced by the discovery, contemplation and detestation of sin — as when a sinner with bitterness of heart considers his life, and ponders the greatness, the number and the foulness of his sins, his loss of eternal life and his gain of eternal damnation — this contrition makes a man a hypocrite and a greater sinner.[1]

"Everything that is not of faith is sin," says St Paul in Romans xiv. So, too, all my opponents say that true contrition for sin must be the fruit of love, otherwise it is not true contrition. That is the very doctrine I have taught in this article, and yet they condemn their own doctrine because I also teach it. Even though one contemplates his own sin, and all the harm that sin has done, without faith and love it does not help him with God. Even the devil and all the damned have this sort of contrition, which we Germans call "the contrition of Judas" or "gallows-contrition."

Rom. 14:23

Judas' Contrition

It is this way. Because they are without grace and have not the spirit of God, it is impossible for them to love righteousness; and even though, compelled by the commandment of the Church or by the fear of death, they are forced to think upon their sins, nevertheless their hearts are in such a state that if there were no hell, or if they could do it without fear and shame, they would prefer to have nothing to do with contrition, confession and satisfaction. It is not possible for them to change their hearts by the power of their own nature without the grace of God; for of himself man can do nothing good, but only evil, as I shall

[1] From the Sermon on Repentance of 1519 (Weimar Ed., I. 319).

prove in Article xxvi; even though he may go through the motions of doing good, it is lies and deceit and hypocrisy.

For this reason I have taught that everyone ought first to search his own heart and see whether he hates his sin thoroughly and of his own free will and accord. If he finds that he does not, then let him hold his contrition in contempt, and first fall on his knees and pray to his Lord, and have prayers offered in his behalf, that his contrition may be real and true, as the Church prays, Et cor poenitens tribue;[1] then let him meditate upon his sins. A contrite heart is a rare thing and a great grace, and is not attained by thinking of sin and hell, but only by receiving the inpoured Holy Spirit. Otherwise Judas would have had the very best contrition, for he thought of his sin with great sorrow. On the other hand, a forced and feigned contrition is a common thing, as experience shows, for many confessions are made in Lent and yet there is little improvement in men's lives.

1 Tim. 4:1

The Danger of False Contrition

Of these false teachers of hypocritical and false contrition St Paul prophesied in I Timothy iv, "There shall come teachers who cleave to seducing spirits, and with hypocrisy and a good appearance shall they teach lies, and shall have scars branded on their conscience." Is it not "teaching lies" when men are taught to consider that contrition good which only appears to be good, but is without faith, love, desire and willingness,—which are given only by the grace of God? They "brand a scar on their consciences." Such a scar is not born with them, nor does it grow, but is stamped upon them from without; in like manner their troubles of conscience are not the fruit of grace, but have been forced upon them and produced in them by falsely invented notions, and they pretend to a contrition which is not real.

---

[1] "Grant us a penitent heart." A verse from the hymn Jam Christe sol justitiae (DANIEL, I, 235; JULIAN, Dict. of Hymnol., 2d ed., 576). The second stanza runs, Da tempus acceptabile et poenitens cor tribue.

A false conscience and contrition of this kind make a man not only a hypocrite, but a greater sinner, as St Jerome says,[1] Simulata sanctitas est duplex iniquitas (Pretended righteousness is double wickedness); "double" because, in the first place, there is no real, true righteousness present, but rather a heart that does not will and love to be righteous; and because, in the second place, this real wickedness is covered over with forced notions and pretended contrition, and gives itself out as true contrition and righteousness, whereby it seeks to lie to God and deceive Him. It is against this false contrition, which the pope and his liars teach in all their books to be the true contrition, that I have set this article and do now set it and hold it.

It also happens that while meditating upon their sins, these false penitents feel again—though deep in their hearts perhaps—the flames and sparks of desire for the repetition of past sins, or wicked inclinations toward former hatred and envy, and thus in their very contrition they acquire a real desire to commit sins which they would perhaps have forgotten if they had not meditated upon them. So utterly unprofitable is everything that does not spring from the gracious working of God, that St Paul says (in Romans v, Galatians iii, and I Corinthians xv) that sins only increase when they are recognised and thought about without the grace of God. But these branded[2] leaders of the blind still strive to deceive us, to represent these things that cause us to stumble and increase our sin as true contrition, and to persuade us that they are such.

Rom. 5:12 ff. Gal. 3:21 f. 1 Cor. 15:56

It is true, indeed, that by the imposition of penalties and by this sort of compulsory repentance, hardened sinners are prevented for a time from committing their evil deeds before the eyes of men, but that does not make their

[1] In the Commentary on Isaiah, VI, 16 (Migne, xxiv, 240). Luther's quotation is not accurate.

[2] Cf. 1 Tim. 4 : 1, quoted above.

hearts righteous in the sight of God. They refrain from their wickedness only so long as they are obliged to respect and fear men. But the aim of my doctrine has been to diminish the number of these hypocrites and "seared consciences"—which the pope and his followers daily increase by means of their devil's doctrine—and to make true and salutary contrition more common, so that we may not anger Almighty God more by our false doctrines and "contritions" than we have already done by our sins. To these men He will apply the words of Matthew xxi, "The harlots and knaves will enter the kingdom before you"; so much more is He embittered by false and pretended penitents and by this compulsory righteousness than by open sins and sinners.

Matt. 21:21

The Need of Grace

To prove this still more clearly. Under the first article[1] I have proved conclusively that even the saints, who live in God's grace, must work and labor hard to love righteousness and strive against their fleshly lusts and sins. If these men, then, cannot sufficiently hate their sin, what are they to do who are not in grace and wage no warfare against sin? What is the carnal man to do against sin, in the absence of the Spirit or of grace, when he contends for sin and against God even when the Spirit is present? Can anything be more foolish than to say that nature must of its own accord hate and avoid, or repent of sin, without God's grace and before it receives God's grace, seeing that it loves, seeks and desires sin, and strives and rages against grace even after grace has laid hold of it! And this is the lament of all the saints. To say that nature shall do of its own accord what the grace of God, with ceaseless striving, is not able to bring it to do, is the same thing as to say that a great tree, which all my power cannot bend, will bend itself if I let it alone, or to say that a stream of water, which I cannot restrain with any dam or weir, will stop of its own accord, if I but let it go. So pope and papists teach us that grace is insufficient to sup-

[1] The reference should be to Art. II; see above, pp. 25 ff.

press sin, but without grace it suppresses and checks itself. Away with such preachers![1]

Therefore, to teach that repentance is to be reached by merely meditating upon sin and its consequences, is lying, stinking, seducing hypocrisy. We ought, first of all, to look into the wounds of Christ, and see in them His love toward us and our ingratitude toward Him, and thus, with heartfelt affection to Christ and detestation of self, to meditate upon our sin. That is a true contrition and a fruitful repentance. For contrition must precede meditation upon sin. Such meditation must flow out of contrition and be its work, not vice versâ. There must be contrition before there can be any meditation upon sin, just as there must be love and desire before there can be any good works or any meditation upon them. Meditation is a fruit of contrition; contrition is the tree. In our country fruit grows on trees and out of trees, and meditation upon sin grows out of contrition; but in the holy land of pope and papists trees may grow on the fruits, contrition out of sins; the people walk on their ears, no doubt, and do everything upside down.

THE SEVENTH ARTICLE

True is the proverb, and better than all the doctrines of contrition that hitherto have been taught,—"To sin no more is the highest repentance," and "A new life is the best repentance,"—that is to say, to turn from evil ways is best.[2]

If to sin no more is not the highest repentance, as it is everywhere said to be, and with truth, then what, pray, is the highest repentance? Speak, holy father pope; we are

True Repentance

[1] In die Hundestage mit solchen Predigern.

[2] From the Sermon on Repentance of 1519 (Weimar Ed., I, 320 f.).

listening. O thou wolf of Christendom, is it not true that to sin no more is not only true contrition for sin, but involves a change in the whole life? Why, then, is it not the highest and the best repentance? Where contrition is, by God's grace, truly present, there the whole man is at the same time changed into another man, with a different heart, disposition, mind and life. That is what I mean by "sinning no more" and "a new life."

Since, then, the pope denies that to sin no more is the highest repentance, let us see what he wishes to call the highest repentance. He surely will not say that to sin evermore is the best repentance, though, to be sure, this is the way that he and his do repent. The first letter of "never" is too much for them, and out of "never sinning" they make "ever sinning." Then he must certainly say that "Judas-repentance" or "gallows-repentance" is the best repentance, for that is brought about entirely by the power of nature without divine grace; it is utterly false, does not create a new life, and does not even cease from sinning because of any earnest and heart-felt intention; and it has been shown above[1] that without grace there is no good in man, since even those who are living in grace have sin and evil struggling within them.

The dear pope, however, is moved by that word of Christ,
Matt. 16:19 "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." He thinks, maybe, that if to sin no more were the highest repentance, then a man could be righteous at home and would not need to run to Rome or send there. That would do away entirely with the Roman curio-shop where they sell and barter keys, letters, seals, sin, grace, God, hell and everything else. Therefore he must bind the best repentance to Rome, to his own purse and strong-box.

We will prove this article of ours, however, with passages
Gal. 6:15 of Scripture. St Paul says, in Galatians vi, that among Christians neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts

[1] See p. 46.

for anything, but only "a new creature." Dear pope, condemn this apostle too, for he says that nothing except "a new creature" counts for anything in Christendom. Now "Judas-contrition," which is without grace, is surely not "a new creature"; it is not even the beginning of "a new creature," but is hypocrisy; therefore it certainly counts for nothing. How, then, can it be the best repentance?

To be sure, the "new creature" and the entrance of grace begin with a great trial and terrifying of the conscience, or with some other great suffering and misfortune, which Revelation iii calls "God's knocking" or "visitation," and Rev. 3:20 it hurts so bitterly that a man is like to die, and thinks he must perish; but at the same time grace and strength are poured into him, so that he does not despair. Thus there begins "a new creature" and a purpose to do good. This is the true and good contrition. So we read of the conversion of St Paul, that when he was surrounded by a Acts light from heaven, and terrified, he received grace at the 9:3 ff. same time, and said, "Lord, what shall I do?" Thus in storms of adversity God pours His grace into us, as it is written in Isaiah xli, "God pursues them and turns peace- Isa. 41:3 fully toward them," and the prophet, Nahum i, "God is a Nahum Lord Whose ways are all thunder and lightning and storm, 1:3 and His foot-steps are like thick dust-clouds"; as if to say, "Those upon whom God wills to bestow grace, He assails by bringing upon them all misfortune, inward and outward, until a man thinks that he must perish because of the great storm and trial."

Those who do not endure these works and ways of God, repel His grace; they cannot greet God when he meets them thus, nor understand His greeting or return it. For His greeting is terrible at the beginning, but comforting in the end. So the angel Gabriel frightens Mary with his Luke salutation, but comforts her again most sweetly. There- 1:28 f. fore the repentance that is occupied with thoughts of peace is hypocrisy. There must be a great earnestness about it

and a deep hurt if the old man is to be put off. When lightning strikes a tree or a man, it does two things at once,—it rends the tree and swiftly slays the man, but it also turns the face of the dead man and the broken branches of the tree to itself, toward heaven. So the grace of God terrifies and pursues and drives a man, but turns him at the same time to itself. About this work of contrition and of grace my dear pope knows less than does a log on the ground; and yet he wants to give decisions about it and pass judgments upon it.

In olden days there were heretics called Donatists,[1] who taught that no one could truly receive baptism or the sacrament unless the priest or bishop who administered it was holy. St Augustine vanquished them, and proved that the sacraments belong not to man but to God alone, Who administers them through good and bad servants. Now that this heresy has been suppressed, the pope's heresy steps in its place, and teaches that, although he who administers the sacraments need not be righteous, he must be high and mighty. What those heretics ascribed to human holiness, that the pope ascribes to human might and greatness, and will not have the sacraments administered save by himself alone, or by his authority, even though God give another man the faith of the Gospel, the Spirit of God and all holiness. The sacraments, which in olden times could not be bound to holiness, are now bound to authority, and hung upon red hats[2] and golden crowns and bishops' mitres, like the scallop-shells on the hats and cloaks of the pilgrims to St James.[3]

Attrition

Not satisfied with this, he goes on to ascribe such authority to his keys[4] that if one comes along who has neither

---

[1] The famous African sect of the IV and V Centuries. See New Schaff-Herzog Encyc., III, 486.

[2] The red hats of the cardinals.

[3] Shells sewed to the hats and cloaks of the pilgrims to the shrine of St. James of Compostella in Spain (cf. Vol. I, p. 191, n. 1) as a sign of the sea-voyage.

[4] The keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16 : 19), claimed by the pope as successor of St. Peter.

faith nor contrition, and hardly has even that half-gallows-repentance[1] which they call attrition,[2] he can, by the power of the keys, turn that half-gallows-repentance into good, genuine, salutary contrition, if only the man himself does not oppose an obstacle. Of this we spoke under the first article.[3] Thus the pope can now create grace and contrition within us, even though we are unbelievers, heathen and Jews, and have no contrition at all; and the sacraments must now depend not merely on the holiness of the priests, as the Donatists said, but on the authority and rank of men, and so faith is destroyed and forgotten. Lo, now, in order that the pope may not lose this heretical and invented authority, whereby he can manufacture the best sort of repentance at will, he must deny that to sin no more is the best repentance.

Beware of Antichrist, the pope; and be sure that the sacraments depend neither on sanctity, nor on rank, nor on authority, nor on riches, nor on hats, nor on gloves, nor on pope, nor on bishops, nor on priests, nor on monks, but only on your own faith. No matter whether he who gives you absolution is holy or unholy, high or low, poor or rich, pope or priest; only believe that through him God is absolving you, and you are absolved. If the sacraments do not depend on holiness, how much less shall they depend on rank, authority, greatness, honor and riches? For holiness is the greatest thing in all the world. That is the meaning of the words of Christ when He says, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In these words Christ does not confer any lordship, but incites every Christian heart to faith, so that when he is absolved by the priest, he may be sure that he is absolved by God. The power of the keys extends only as far as your faith extends; not as far as the pope and his followers choose.

Matt. 16:19

---

[1] See above, p. 43.

[2] i. e., Sorrow for sin, having fear as its motive (cf. Vol. I, p. 20), as distinct from contrition, which must be motived by love.

[3] See above, pp. 17 ff.

To be sure, we must endure their mad and arbitrary assumption, authority and lordship, only you must hold fast the true faith, and believe that no one can give you either less or more than the measure of your faith, and that it is a lie to say that by the power of the keys the pope and his followers can create contrition within you apart from your faith.

THE EIGHTH ARTICLE

Do not undertake to confess all your daily sins,[1] nor even all your mortal sins, for no one can know all his mortal sins, and in ancient times only the public, remembered, mortal sins were confessed.[2]

Venial Sins

They all teach that it is not necessary to confess venial sins, but because I say it, it must be heresy. I believe if I said there is a God and professed all the articles of faith, it would all needs be heresy, merely because I affirm it; so good and honest are the pope and his followers toward me.

Mortal Sins

That not all mortal sins can be either confessed or known is, moreover, the clear teaching of Scripture in
Ps. 19:12 Psalm xviii, "Lord, who can know all his sins? Cleanse Thou me from secret sins." Here the prophet teaches us that we cannot confess our secret sins, for God alone knows them, and we are to obtain remission by prayer. The
Ps. 143:2 cxlii Psalm testifies that these sins are mortal sins, "Lord enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." If the dear saints, God's servants, whom we regard as sinless, have such sins that they cannot be justified in God's sight, what doest thou, wretched pope, that thou wilt justify before God even those who have neither faith nor true contrition and

[1] i. e., Venial sins (Weimar Ed., VII, 117).

[2] From the Sermon on Repentance of 1519 (Weimar Ed., I, 322).

who bring to penance only their damned "gallows-contrition"? Sins because of which the saints cannot be justified in God's sight must surely be mortal, for anything that prevents justification is mortal sin, and vice versâ.

Therefore I have taught the people,—and everyone ought so to teach—that they shall fear God, and after they have used all diligence in confession, say to Him with David, "Behold, dear Lord, I have confessed this sin and that; but Thy judgments are secret and terrible; if Thou wilt enter into judgment with me I shall never stand before Thee no matter what I do; who knoweth all his sins? Therefore I flee from Thy judgment to Thy grace and pray that Thou wilt cleanse me from all my unknown sins." In this way the people can learn to comfort themselves with God's grace, and not with their own contrition, confession and satisfaction, as Antichrist and his disciples teach them to do.

Public Sins

As regards the statement that in ancient times only public sins were confessed, I leave the proof to the histories and to the Epistles of St Paul. I have spoken only of mortal sins that are known to the man himself, though they may be secret so far as others' knowledge is concerned. Beside these sins, I say, there are still others which no one knows but God. Therefore we ought to leave the people in peace and not drive them to search for all their sins, since it is impossible to discover them; and we ought to allow them to confess the sins that occur to them at the time or that they are conscious of, so that they may pay more heed to their faith in God's grace than to the completeness of their confession.[1]

THE NINTH ARTICLE

When we undertake to make a full and complete confession of all our sins, we do nothing else than show that we

[1] Cf. Vol. I, pp. 81 ff.

are not willing to leave the forgiveness of them to God's mercy.[1]

This article is already proved by the one preceding and
Ps. 19:12 by the second, for if it is true, as David says in the xviii Psalm, that no one knows all his sins, we are obliged to leave the unknown sins to the mercy of God, and thus to rely not on our own confession or contrition, but on His grace, and ask in humble, fearful prayer that He will cleanse us from them, as has been said.

Moreover, if we have proved under the first and second articles that all the saints lament the sin in their flesh, from which they cannot free themselves, then we must admit that this remainder of sin must be commended to God's grace, for if He were to judge it strictly—as He will do in the case of those who despise His grace—we should all be found guilty of death. That the pope condemns this article is no wonder, for they teach us to rely in all respects upon our own works and his authority, and not at all upon God's mercy. Thus fear of God and hope in Him are destroyed in Christian hearts. But St Augustine says, in the Confessions, ix,[2] "Woe to the life of man, however good it be, if it is judged without mercy." If St Augustine wishes even a good life to be commended to mercy, and cannot endure God's judgment upon it, should we not then be willing to leave some hidden sins to His Grace? O it is disgusting that such evident truth should be condemned by the pope! Pope and papists are an antichristian lot!

THE TENTH ARTICLE

No one's sins are forgiven unless he believes that they are forgiven when the priest absolves him. Nay, the sin remains unless he believes that it is

[1] From the Sermon on Repentance of 1519 (Weimar Ed., I, 323).
[2] Book IX, c. 13 (Migne, xxxii, 778).

forgiven. For the forgiveness of sin, or infusion of grace, is not enough, but one must believe that sin is forgiven.[1]

The Article Agrees with the Creed

From the condemnation of this article it follows, in the first place, that the article of the Creed is false and heretical in which all Christians say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, one holy Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins"; for this article of mine teaches nothing else than that we ought to believe in the forgiveness of sins, as the article of the Creed says. I thank thee, most holy father pope, that thou now teachest what the world never knew before, that the article of the Creed concerning the forgiveness of sins is heretical. But if this one part of the Creed is heretical, then all its parts are certainly heretical. Thus the most holy father pope here condemns the whole Creed so roundly that I am only afraid no one will believe that such a thing is actually contained in the bull. But it is indeed there, and therefore they are ashamed that the bull is now translated into German, and their antichristian, heretical raving comes to light.

It follows, in the second place, that a sinner ought to say to the priest who absolves him, "You lie; my sins are not forgiven, as you say, for the holy father pope has lately issued a bull in which he condemns all those who believe that their sins are forgiven and that the absolution is true. On the contrary, he who goes to confession is rather to think, 'I shall confess, but I shall hold the absolution for mere lies, heresy and error, and call all priests liars, heretics and seducers, if they absolve anybody'; the pope in his bull has bid me do this."

It follows, in the third place, that Christ himself is a liar and a heretic when He says to Peter in Matthew xvi, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." For this tender bull forbids anyone, on pain of ban and stake, to believe that what the priest looses is loosed; that is, no one is to believe that his sins are forgiven him,

Matt. 16:19

[1] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 543).

as my article says. If anyone doubts that such abominable things are in the bull, let him read it and observe what it condemns. I should myself have believed that the heavens would fall before such things emanated from the pope. I think the pope is hearing his end.

This article, however, is so evidently true that the ears of all Christians are terrified and appalled at the pope's condemnation of it. For it is the commonest custom everywhere in the Church for Christians to encourage one another to believe and trust in the mercy of God, which forgives their sins. To be sure, the Evil Spirit, in the hour of death, is wont to suggest to men the very thing the pope teaches in this bull, viz., that they ought not to believe their sins forgiven. He suggests it, not as something right and proper to do, but because he is the enemy of grace and faith and truth; but the pope is worse than all devils because he teaches this as right and as good doctrine; he sits in God's place and condemns the Creed. This no devil has ever done. Thine end is at hand, O thou son of perdition, Antichrist! Cease, pope; it is too plain and too much.

Matt. 9:2 We shall prove this article, however. In Matthew ix, when Christ heals the paralytic, He says first, "My son, trust and believe,[1] and thy sins are forgiven thee." Here you see plainly that his sins are not forgiven until he believes that they are forgiven. He also absolves Mary Luke 7:50 Magdalen because of her faith, for His words are, "Go in peace; thy faith hath helped thee." You see the faith, which helped her and blotted out her sin, was there first, so that Christ Himself does not ascribe the forgiveness of her sins to His own absolution, nor to His keys, nor to His authority, but to her faith. Yet the pope pretends that sins are forgiven because of his authority, not because of man's faith. It is plain to be seen what kind of spirit bids him say that.

Everyone knows that the priest's absolution is a verdict —not his own, but God's—which demands faith, by virtue

[1] Vulgate, Confide. Cf. above, p. 18, n. 1.

of Christ's word, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The priest says, "I absolve thee"; that is to say, "I loose thee," or "Thy sins are forgiven thee." How does it agree with the absolution if the sinner is not to believe this divine verdict? Matt. 16:19

Now burn and condemn books, pope. So shall God cast thee down and give thee up to madness, that thou mayest receive the reward thou hast merited, because thou strivest always against divine truth. Let him doubt who will that the pope, who spreads more than enough of these errors throughout the world and receives in return for it the wealth of the nations, is the true, chief, final Antichrist. Thank God, I know him.

THE ELEVENTH ARTICLE

Thou shalt in no wise trust that thou art absolved because of thy contrition, but because of the word of Christ, when He says to Peter, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose, shall be loosed." I say that if thou art absolved by the priest, thou shalt firmly believe that thou art absolved, however it may be with thy contrition.[1] Matt. 16:19

This article is sufficiently proved in those that immediately precede; for who would confess or repent, if he did not believe that his sins would be forgiven him? What would a priest say if I were to come to him and say, "Sir, I have committed such and such sins and am sorry, but I do not believe that I am absolved by you." He would certainly think me crazy. But this bull teaches that this is what we are to do, and condemns the kind of faith that my article teaches.

Suppose it were true that our sins are forgiven because

[1] From the Sermon on Repentance of 1519 (Weimar Ed., I, 323).

of our contrition, as the bull teaches, and not because of God's word alone, as my article teaches; then a man could boast before God that he had attained grace and forgiveness by his own contrition and merit, and not solely by the mercy of God. This is abominable and terrible, and an utter denial of grace. For God's mercy and grace are bestowed freely upon the undeserving, as Paul says in Romans v, "We are endowed with grace and justified freely and altogether out of mercy," and Psalm xxiv says, "Lord, be gracious to my sins for Thy name's sake"; it does not say, "for my sake," or "for my name's sake," or "for my merit's sake."

Rom. 3:24; 5:15 ff.
Ps. 25:11

Moreover, if it has been proved above[1] that the dear saints still have sin and that sin strives against grace and grace against sin, then it is clear enough that grace is given not only to those who have not merited it, but even to those who have merited evil, and are enemies of grace. How then shall our contrition be so meritorious that God forgives sins for its sake, and not rather for His sake Who says through the prophet Isaiah, "I will turn my displeasure from thee for My name's sake, and will do all things for Mine own sake, that I may not be blasphemed; and Mine honor will I give to none other"? Now if our sins were forgiven because of our contrition, the honor would be ours and not God's; He would also be blasphemed, as though sins were forgiven for something else than for His name's sake.

Isa. 48:9, 10

So King Manasseh prayed that God would forgive his sins for the sake of His loving kindness and His promise, regardless of his own merit or contrition. Why make a long story of it? If anyone's sins are forgiven because of his contrition, as this accursed bull lyingly and blasphemously declares, then let him do away with the prayer that we all say, "Lord, be gracious to me, a poor, unworthy sinner," and let him only say, "Lord, forgive me, who am a worthy and well-deserving and

Prayer of Man. 5:5

[1] Under Article II, pp. 25 ff.

sufficiently holy man, my sins, and rebuke the centurion in the Gospel who said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof.'" If the pope and his saints are so worthy that God must forgive their sins because of their contrition, I would advise him to put on his triple crown and saddle his steed with gold and pearls, ride with all his pomp into God's presence, and defy Him with his own great worthiness. If God will not forgive his sins, let him put Him under the ban and chase Him out of heaven. How far wilt thou go, thou devilish pride? It is easy to see why you have yourself called the "most holy" in all the world. Only go on. It will reach its end, this blasphemy of yours, this raging against God. Matt. 8:8

Therefore I still say, and I warn everyone to give God the honor, and not trust that his sins are forgiven because of his own contrition—for no contrition is in God's sight sufficient—but only because of the mercy of God, whose will it is that He be honored, praised and loved as One who is gracious to us unworthy and undeserving men. Beware of this bull and of those who teach the like doctrine.

THE TWELFTH ARTICLE

If it were possible that anyone could confess without contrition, or if a priest were to absolve anyone thoughtlessly or in jest, nevertheless, if such a one believe that he is absolved, he is assuredly absolved.[1]

In all the Gospel Christ made everything depend on faith when He said, "All things are possible to him that believeth," and again, "As thou believest, so be it done unto thee." Therefore it is true that although the priest may be in jest, nevertheless, if I receive his absolution in earnest, and believe it, the result is not according to what Mark 9:23 Matt. 8:13

[1] From the Sermon on Repentance of 1519 (Weimar Ed., I, 323).

he does, but according to what I believe. I said this[1] in order to show how great and necessary a part of repentance faith is. Everything depends on it. And although faith is not possible without contrition, as I said above[2] when I showed that the inpouring of faith and grace is accompanied by a great disturbance of conscience, yet if it were possible faith alone would be sufficient; for God has not conditioned the offer of His grace on contrition or on any work, but only on faith, saying, "He that believeth shall be saved."

Mark 16:16

And why should not a thoughtless absolution be valid, when St Paul says in Ephesians i that the Word of God is valid and helps those who believe, even when it is preached by His enemies and persecutors? Besides, all of them confess that the sacraments are efficacious though administered by wicked and unbelieving priests, nay, even if the priest hates the penitent. Surely sin and unbelief are worse than jesting and thoughtlessness. To go still farther. They must confess that he who heartily desires the sacrament receives its benefit, even though the priest arbitrarily withhold it,[3] so completely does everything depend on the faith of the penitent. According to his faith he receives, whether the priest give or withold the sacrament, whether he be in jest or in earnest. However the sacrament comes, whatever it promises, it is God's sacrament and can be received by faith. But God's friend at Rome, the pope, would like to destroy this faith and seduce us into trusting his authority more than we trust God's sacrament, as though by his mere authority, without our faith, he could forgive sins. God keep all Christian hearts against this Antichrist and apostle of Satan!

Phil. 1:15 f.

---

[1] i. e., In the Sermon on Repentance.

[2] See p. 49.

[3] This is the votum sacramenti, "or desire for the sacrament." See Prot. Realencyk., XVII, 367.

THE THIRTEENTH ARTICLE

In the sacrament of penance and in the remission of guilt the pope or bishop does no more than the humblest priest; nay, if a priest is not to be had, any Christian does just as much, even though it be a woman or a child.[1]

This article hits the sore spot.[2] There was good reason, therefore, to guard against it and condemn it! For if this article were allowed to stand it would knock the keys out of the Roman idol's coat-of-arms. But condemnation will not help him any; he will not really confute it, and I shall prove it, as here follows.

It has been abundantly proved above[3] that it is not the work of the priest but the faith of the penitent which effects the forgiveness of sins. If the pope and all the priests together were to speak the absolution over a sinner, it would not be valid, nor would it help him at all unless the sinner believed it; for the word stands fast, "He that believeth not is lost," and there is no help for it. Nay, how could the absolution of the pope and all the priests be of any avail without faith? If even Christ and God Himself were to speak the absolution, it would be of no avail without faith. Is it not true that God daily preaches and works wonders for men, and yet they help nobody except those who believe on Him? If, then, forgiveness depends entirely upon faith and not on the office or authority of the priest; and if the pope can do as little toward the bestowal of faith as the humblest priest, the priest as little as a woman or a child, I should like the pope to teach me what he does in this matter more than a simple priest. Out with your wisdom, my dear pope! I will tell you

Mark 16:16

---

[1] From the German Sermon on the Sacrament of Penance of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 716).

[2] Literally, "pus-sac."

[3] In the articles next preceding.

what you do more than a simple priest. You hang up great banners with keys on them,[1] and sell bulls, ring bells, cheat lands and peoples out of their money, goods, bodies and souls, and lead them with you into the abyss of hell. This is what you do more than other priests and Christians.

It has been said above that the Donatists,[2] whom St Augustine overcame and who wished to bind all the sacraments to the sanctity of the priests and not to the faith of the penitents, were nevertheless more tolerable than the pope and his bishops, who wish to bind the sacraments to rank and authority. For if a holy priest does no more in the sacraments than a sinful priest, how can a great high-priest do any more than a lowly and insignificant priest, since holiness is far more important than authority? Therefore it is clear that the pope has just the same title to the sole possession of the keys that Lucifer, when he was in heaven, had to the throne of God. For the keys are given for nothing else than the sacrament of penance, which is the common property of all Christians. No one has a greater or smaller part in it, save in proportion as his faith in it is greater or smaller.

I ask further, most holy father pope, whether you also have a sacrament of baptism differing from that which all priests and Christians have, and whether, by virtue of your exalted rank, you do more when you baptise than does a chaplain, a layman, a woman or a child? Speak up! Have you lost your voice? If you have a different bap-
Eph. 4:5 tism, then St Paul condemns you in Ephesians iv, when he says, "One faith, one baptism, one Lord," etc. But if the sacrament of baptism is the same among all Christians, so that in case of necessity a layman, a woman or a child may administer it—which happens every day—why should not the sacrament of the keys, i. e., penance or

[1] The papal coat-of-arms (see above, p. 61) displayed by the indulgence sellers. The whole passage refers to the abuses of indulgences.

[2] See above, p. 50.

absolution, also be common property? Is not that too, as well as baptism, a sacrament? And is your mass, too, any different from that of all other priests? Can you give more of the body of Christ than can our chaplain? Why, then, do you make the sacrament of the keys an exception and wish to do more in this sacrament than all the rest of the Church? You are seeking to establish your own arbitrary authority over the churches, and out of the sacrament of the keys, which is the equal and common property of all, you make for yourself an unequal, uncommon authority and tyranny. If all the sacraments have the same effect in the hands of every man who can administer them, then you cannot reserve to yourself this one sacrament of the keys, and make for yourself a sacrament of your own, different from that which the whole Church has in common.

Therefore let all Christians beware of the pope's antichristian poison. If all baptisms and all masses are equally valid, wherever and by whomever they are administered, then the absolution also is equally valid wherever and by whomever it is administered. For everything depends on the faith of him who receives it, not on the holiness, learning, rank or authority of him who administers it. We cannot divide baptism and give the pope and the bishops a part in it different from that which all Christians have; neither can we divide the mass and the keys so that the pope may have a mass and a sacrament of the keys different from those which the whole Church has. But if he has a different sacrament, or more of a sacrament, then St Paul excludes him from the Church, for he says in Ephesians iv, Eph. 4:5
"One faith, one baptism, one Lord."

To be sure, the pope and the bishops reserve to themselves certain cases and certain sins;[1] but that is a matter of custom and human law and has been introduced by authority, Even so, however, they do more than others, not in the remission of guilt, but only in the remission of

[1] Cf. Vol. I, pp. 96 ff., 30; Vol. II, pp. 105 ff.

the penalty or punishment.[1] The remission of guilt belongs properly to the keys and the sacrament of penance, and it requires faith; the remission of the penalty does not require faith, but is perceived by the sinner;[2] it can take place without faith and does not properly belong to the sacrament of the keys. My article, however, speaks of the remission of guilt, and this, like baptism and the mass, is the common possession of all men and cannot be made captive to any rank or authority, as the pope and his followers lyingly pretend.

THE FOURTEENTH ARTICLE

No one ought to say to the priest that he is contrite, nor ought the priest to demand that he do so.[3]

That, too, you must hold to be error, holy father pope; but now you must admit it to be true, for I prove it as follows.

Whether our contrition is genuine or not is a question to be decided not by our own opinion, but by the judgment of God, and, therefore, no one can say without presumption
2 Cor. 10:18 that he is truly contrite; for St Paul says in I Corinthians x, "Not he who praiseth himself is approved, but he whom
1 Cor. 4:4 God praiseth," and in I Corinthians iv, "I am not conscious of anything, but I am not thereby justified; I judge not mine own self, but God the Lord is He Who judgeth
Ps. 19:12 me," and David says in Psalm xviii, "Lord, who knoweth all his sins?"

Now, if a man were required to say he was truly contrite, he would be driven to presumption and to the impossible task of knowing all his sins. Nay, since all the saints still have sin and evil within them,[4] it is impossible for anyone to have such contrition as will be sufficient in God's judg-

[1] For the distinction, see Vol. I, p. 19.
[2] i. e., It is not a matter of faith, but of "sight."
[3] From the Sermon on Repentance of 1519 (Weimar Ed., I, 322).
[4] See above, pp. 25 ff.

ment, but they all say with David, "Lord enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight will no man living be found justified." If no one will be found justified, how will anyone be found contrite, since contrition is the beginning of justification? Why then, O pope, teach Christians to be proud and presumptuous, so that they come under God's judgment? Ps. 143:2

Christians ought to be so instructed that every penitent may know that before God no contrition is worthy and sufficient, and may say, "Behold, dear Lord, I know that I will not be found truly contrite before Thy judgment, and that there is still much evil lust in me which hinders true contrition, yet, because Thou hast promised grace, I flee from Thy judgment, and because my contrition is nothing in Thy sight, I put my reliance and my hope upon Thy promise in this sacrament." If the priest inquires about his contrition, he ought to say, "Sir, in my own eyes I am contrite, but in God's sight it is but a poor contrition, with which I am not able to stand in His presence; yet I hope in His grace, which you are now, at His command, to promise me." Thus the people ought always to be urged to faith, for at death contrition will become all too great and faith all too small. God's promise in the sacrament is sure, our contrition is never sure; therefore He would have us build not on our unsure contrition, but on His sure promise, so that we may be able to stand fast in every time of trouble.

THE FIFTEENTH ARTICLE

They are greatly in error who go to the sacrament relying on the fact that they have confessed, or that they are not conscious of any mortal sin, and have said their prayers. All these eat and drink judgment to themselves. But if they believe and trust that in the sacrament they receive grace,

this faith alone makes them pure and worthy.[1]

This article I have taught for the sake of those people of timid conscience, who prepare themselves for the sacrament with so much anxiety and torment, and yet have no peace and do not know how they stand with God; for it is not possible for a heart to be at peace unless it trust in God, and not in its own works and diligence and prayers.

Rom. 5:1 St Paul says in Romans v, "By faith we have peace with God." If peace, then, comes only by faith, it cannot come by works, prayers or anything else. Experience also teaches that even though a man works himself to death, his heart has no peace until he begins to yield himself to God's grace, rely upon it and trust in it.

Acts 15:9 St Peter also, in Acts xv, teaches that God cleanses the heart only by faith. Surely, then, the sacrament must be preceded by faith, without which no prayers cleanse; and so this article teaches. Besides, it has been sufficiently shown above[2] that all works done without faith are death

Rom. 14:23 and sin, as St Paul teaches in Romans xiv, "Everything that is not of faith is sin." How, therefore, can confession, prayers, and all sorts of preparations be without sin if they are without faith? Therefore faith alone must surely be the cleansing and worthy preparation.

Not that I condemn these prayers and preparations! But no one ought to rely on them, and a man must have something more than these preparations, viz., faith. In the sacrament God promises and offers His grace, as was said in speaking of the first article;[3] therefore prayers and works are not enough, but this divine promise must be believed, lest by our unbelief we make Him a liar. If you go to the sacrament with many preparations, but without this confidence in His promise, what else are

[1] From the Sermon on the Worthy Preparation of the Heart to Receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 330).

[2] See pp. 19 f.

[3] See above, p. 21. Cf. Vol. I, pp. 299 ff., and Vol. II, pp. 11, 197.

you doing but saying to God, "In the promise of this sacrament Thou liest, and wilt not give me grace"? O, O, O thou wicked bull! What dost thou teach! What dost thou condemn!

They have driven us away from this faith, and from this way of using the sacrament by means of the word of St Paul, "Let a man examine himself, and then let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup." They have applied this saying to the searching of the conscience for sin, although it refers rather to faith and confidence, since no man can discover all his mortal sins, as has been proved above[1] from the xviii Psalm, "Lord, who knoweth his sins?" Moreover, it is not enough to be conscious of no mortal sin, since St Paul says in I Corinthians iv, "I am not conscious of anything, yet I am not thereby justified." Why then are we driven to such impossible, useless, vain works, and why is nothing said about faith, for which a man ought most of all to prove or examine himself? As was said under the previous article, they are always trying to drive us away from faith, into works; I would that we were driven away from works, into faith. Works will follow faith, but faith never follows works.

1 Cor. 11:28

Ps. 19:12

1 Cor. 4:4

THE SIXTEENTH ARTICLE

It were well that the Church, in a General Council, should decree that, in the sacrament, both kinds[2] be given to the laity; and the Bohemians,[3] who receive both kinds, are not heretics or schismatics.[4]

This article St Paul easily wins from the pope, but he will not be put under the ban by his holiness, and cares

[1] See above, pp. 52 f.

[2] The elements of the Lord's Supper are technically known as the two "kinds."

[3] The adherents of John Hus; see Vol. I, p. 140, n. 3.

[4] From the Treatise on the Blessed Sacrament of 1519 (Vol. II, p. 19; cf. pp. 178 ff.).

nothing for the bull. Nay, he puts the pope, with his bulls and all his followers, under the ban, for he says in Gala-
Gal. 1:8 tians i, "He who preaches otherwise than as ye have been taught in the Gospel, though he were an angel from heaven, let him be banned and accursed." Listen, pope; that means you.

Matt. 26:26 f. Mark 14:22 ff. Luke 22:19 f. According to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Christ at the Last Supper instituted both kinds and gave both kinds to all, and said to all, "This do, as oft as ye do it, in remembrance of Me." Now the pope teaches us differently, and gives only one kind, a half-sacrament; therefore he is assuredly under the curse and ban of St Paul. If thou, pope, and all who are thine, will crack this nut, and canst prove that thou art not banned and accursed before God, I will recant everything that I have written in all my life and say thou art a pope. Otherwise, take it not amiss if I call thee Antichrist, whom St Paul bans and curses as one who changes his Lord's ordinance, and resists and overthrows His Gospel. Thou canst not say anything nor adduce anything to the contrary; that thou knowest. Why then set thy capricious will against so clear a text of the Gospel? Better bid us deny even the Lord's Prayer!

They say Christ gave both kinds to the apostles only, that is, the priests, and commanded them to give one or both kinds to the laity.[1] I ask, where is this command written? I think it must be in the dark.[2] It is a wanton lie, an invented gloss.[3] When Christ gave the cup, He added the word all, and said, "Drink ye all of it." He did not say this when He gave the bread, doubtless because He wished to anticipate this outrageous Roman heresy, foreseeing that they would one day rob His Christians of the cup. It would be more in accordance with the Gospel if they withheld the bread, for He does not say, "Eat ye all," but "Drink ye all of it." O how

[1] See the Babylonian Captivity, Vol. II, pp. 179 ff.
[2] Im finster Rauchloch.
[3] See Vol. II, p. 92, n. 1.

they would shout and rave if the word all had been spoken with the bread and not with the cup. No one could hold them down. Yet when they are so plainly caught with a clear text, they deny that they are caught or bound by it.

Again, in the hymn Verbum supernum,[1] the Church sings how He gave His disciples flesh and blood under the two kinds, that so He might feed the whole man, who is two-fold in nature. If the Church is right in singing thus, then they ought surely to give both kinds to all Christians, since not the priests only, but the laity also are men and two-fold in nature, and the hymn speaks of this food as a whole food for the whole of man.

But we will adduce still stronger reasons. St Paul says in I Corinthians x, "We are one bread and one body, even as we all partake of one bread and one cup." I ask whether the laity also are not Christians and members of the Christian body, of whom St Paul here says, "We are all one body"?[2] I hope they will have to say Yes to that. Why, then, will the pope cut them off and allow only the priests to be Christians? For he will not allow them all to partake of the one bread and the one cup, though St Paul here says that all those who belong to the body are to partake of the one bread and one cup, if they can and if they are not prevented; but of that more below.

1 Cor. 10:17

The Two Kinds Scriptural

Afterwards, in I Corinthians xi, he says, not to the priests but to all the Christians of that city, "I have received of the Lord that which I also have taught you" (he does not say, "that which I also have taught your priests alone"). "The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, thanked God, brake it and said, Take and eat,

1 Cor. 11:23 ff.

---

[1] A hymn of Thomas Aquinas (JULIAN, Dict. of Hymnol., 2d ed., p. 1218). The third stanza runs,

Quibus sub bina specie
Carnem dedit et sanguinem
Ut duplicis substantiae
Totum cibaret hominem.

[2] i. e., Of the Church.

this is My body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner the cup, when He had supped, and said, This is the cup, a new testament in my blood; this do, as oft as ye drink, in remembrance of Me." Here you see what the apostle received of the Lord and gave to the Corinthians, namely, both kinds, as he says in such clear and express words that I wonder the schismatic Roman Christians, those half-sacramenters, do not blush at them.

1 Cor. 11:26 He says further, "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye show the Lord's death till He come." He does not say, "As often as ye priests alone eat and drink," but speaks to all of them. Nor does he say they are to do all this till the pope come and ordain it otherwise, but until the Lord Himself come at the last day.

1 Cor. 11:27 Again, "Whoso eateth this bread and drinketh this cup unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." He does not say, "Whatever priest," but in general, "whoever among you all." Nor does he say that such a one is guilty of the body only, but also of the blood of Christ. He always puts the two things together, eating and drinking, bread and cup.

Again, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup." He does not say, "Let the priest alone examine himself," but every man in Corinth who is a Christian, for, of course, he does not write this Epistle to the heathen. Nor does he say, "Let a man eat only of the bread, and drink not the cup," as the pope teaches, robbing us of our own sacrament.

1 Cor. 11:28 Yet again, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, as one who doth not consider the Lord's body." That, too, is said to all, and the drinking is connected with the eating, though the pope separates it from the eating and makes little of it.

1 Cor. 11:30 Finally, "For this cause many among you are sick, and weak, and die, because ye eat and drink unworthily." I hardly think this punishment and plague came upon the

priests alone, for he says, "Many among you are sick"; otherwise he would have said, "Many of your priests are sick." What can this Roman perverter bring forward against these strong sayings of St Paul?

Moreover, he has against him the long-continued practice of the whole Church in all the world, the practice that still continues among the Greeks,[1] whom even Rome itself dare not call heretics or schismatics because of it. Why, then, should I suffer the Bohemians, or anyone else, to be called heretics, because they receive both kinds, according to Christ's teaching and St Paul's, and according to the practice of all the world except the pope. Besides, it was decided at the Council of Basel[2] that they do right. Why, then, does this bull condemn its own council?

Therefore I have recanted this article,[3] and now recant it again, as one that I have put too mildly and gently. I now say that on this point the Greeks and Bohemians are not heretics or schismatics, but the most Christian people and the best followers of the Gospel on earth. I beseech them by these presents, through Christ our Lord, by all means to remain constant in this their opinion, and not to let themselves be led astray by the perverted and outrageous laws of the Roman tyrant and Antichrist, who in sheer wantonness takes away from Christians the one kind, the half of the sacrament, when Christ Himself and all the apostles give it to them, and the Church in all the world has long time used it.

He[4] commands the priests to receive both kinds, and gives his reason,—it is not seemly to receive the one kind only, since both kinds are one whole and complete sacrament, which is not to be divided. On the other hand, he forbids the laity to take one of the two kinds, and again gives his reason,—one kind is a whole and complete sacra-

---

[1] i. e., The reception of both elements by the laity.
[2] The Council of Basel in 1434 allowed the use of both elements to the Bohemians.
[3] In the Babylonian Captivity, Vol. II, p. 172.
[4] i. e., The pope. With the following passage compare Vol. II, pp. 168 ff.

ment. Thus he tosses God's words and sacraments about like any juggler. The sacrament is whole and not whole when and where he pleases. He is free to contradict himself, to lie both ways, and to deceive. Thus the priests have a different sacrament from the laity, just as he claims[1] to have different keys and a different sacrament of penance from that which the whole Church has.

The Pope a Schismatic

In the second place, I say that the pope and all who knowingly abet him in this matter are heretics, schismatics, under the ban and accursed, because they teach differently from what is in the Gospel, and follow their own will, against the common usage of the whole Church. For heretics and schismatics are men who transgress the doctrine of their fathers, separate themselves from the common usage and practice of the whole Church, and causelessly, out of sheer wantonness, devise new usages and practices against the holy Gospel. That is what the Antichrist in Rome does in this and in many other things; and yet he lifts his shameless, scandalous mouth to heaven and slanders the Greek Church, saying that it is a schismatic sect, when he is himself the chief cause and sole author of all schisms and parties. This is plain as day, and all history proves it.

The Laity Not to Blame

From this condemnation I wish to except the poor multitude and make excuse for them.[2] It is not their fault that they receive only the one kind. The pope and his followers have the sole guilt, and it is they only whom I have in mind. The case is just like that of baptism. If anyone craved baptism and the pope wantonly forbade it to him and deprived him of it, his faith and desire would be accepted by God as though he were actually baptised, since the hindrance is not his fault.[3] But the pope who withheld baptism from him would be a heretic and no Christian. We must even endure it that the pope and his followers do

---

[1] See Art. XIII, above, pp. 62 f.
[2] Cf. Vol. II, pp. 186 f.
[3] Again the votum sacramenti, see above, p. 60.

not preach, though that is a still higher obligation. Nevertheless, we must not join them in wrong-doing on this account, but only endure the wrong they do us.

Therefore, although it is the pope's duty to give us both kinds, if he does not do it, and thus robs us, we can endure his authority and the wrong it does us, and yet remain, in the sight of God, good Christians, and still receive the fruit of the whole sacrament by means of our faith and desire. What should we do if he, or the Turk, took both kinds from us? What do prisoners and sick people and young children do now? None of them can receive either kind, yet all of them can retain the fruits of the sacrament. So in ancient days many holy fathers lived for years in the wilderness and never went to the sacrament.

But I speak only of those who desire both kinds, and I say that they should be given both kinds, and not refused them, for the pope is not the lord of the sacrament, but its servant, and in duty bound to give it to anyone who may desire it, as is the case with baptism, penance, and the other sacraments. Christ also compels no one to take the sacrament, for He does not say, "Ye shall do it," but "When ye do it, remember Me." He has not commanded us to do it, but to remember Him when we do it. The doing of it He left to our freedom. The pope seizes on this freedom and takes possession of it; he compels us to go to the sacrament once a year,[1] which Christ does not do. Thus, with his whole nature, in his commands and his prohibitions, he is the direct opposite of Christ, as befits a true Antichrist. Luke 22:19

I say this not to incite anyone to commit any outrage against the pope's tyranny (for we ought to endure tyranny and wrong, and it does us no harm), but only in order that everyone may have a correct understanding of this matter, and see how Christ and the pope compare, and how things ought and how they ought not to be done in the Church, so that no one may involve himself in the pope's error and

[1] By a decree of Innocent III (1215). Text in Mirbt, Quellen zur Gesch. d. Papsthums², No. 223.

destruction by justifying his acts, calling his wrong right and praising it, as do his own knaves. When anyone does us bodily harm we ought to endure it patiently and confess our guilt to God, but we are not bound to say that he is right and to praise him as though he had done well. In the same way, although the pope withdraws the Gospel and the sacraments and takes them from us, we are to endure it, and confess our sins to God Who has set the pope over us as a plague. We have deserved, indeed, that Antichrist rule over us, but we ought not to praise him and justify him, as though he were doing well, and call him s a n c t i s s i m u s into the bargain. On the contrary, we ought to give public testimony to his devilish, heretical tyranny, and rebuke it as Christ rebuked the wrongdoing of the Jews, though He endured the wrong at their hands.

In conclusion, I will change this article and say, It were well if not only a general council, but every bishop in his own diocese were to decree anew that both kinds, the whole sacrament, be given to the laity, and thus were to follow the Gospel, no thanks to the pope. For it is the duty of a bishop to set himself against the wolf in behalf of the sheep of Christ, whom Christ has committed to him, and to administer the Gospel at any cost, because he occupies the place of Christ.

But if that cannot be, I advise every Christian layman to remember that his Lord, Christ, has instituted both kinds in the sacrament, and therefore heartily to crave both kinds and to believe, and thus receive the holy sacrament half with the body, half with the spirit, since these perilous times of Antichrist permit nothing more. Let him also lament to God that because of our sins we are robbed of what is ours and of the sacrament, which Christ has given us and Antichrist has taken from us. For if anyone despise the two kinds, at least in his desires, such a man is no Christian. Let no one be moved by their idle talk when they say that the whole sacrament is received in the bread.

Christ well knew that it was all received in one kind, nay, in faith alone, without the sacrament, yet it was not without reason that He instituted both kinds.

THE SEVENTEENTH ARTICLE

The treasures of the Church, out of which the pope grants indulgences, are not the merits of Christ and of the saints.[1]

The pope and his hypocrites, in order to make the indulgences precious in the people's sight and gather to themselves the treasures of the world, devise this doctrine, and teach, to the great dishonor of Christ, that Christ's merits are the indulgence-treasure. But if asked what ground they have for this in Scripture, they puff themselves up and boast of their authority, and reply, "Is it not enough that we say so?" Against them I set up this article, and can base it on Scripture.

Christ Himself says in John vi that He is the living bread from heaven, and that he who eateth thereof liveth forever; and Isaiah liii says that He hath borne our sins; nor is there any Christian so simple as not to know that Christ's merits and sufferings take away our sins and save us, but all believe that He died for our sins. From this it is clear that Christ's sufferings and merits are a living treasure and give everlasting life to all who have part in them. Now they themselves must confess that the indulgence does not give life, but is a dead thing, by which no one is made better, let alone made to live. It does not take away sin, but the penalty of sin.[2] Now no one but the pope and those who flatter him is so foolish as to hold that the taking away, or remission, of the penalty makes anyone better; though the imposing of a penalty may make a man better, as we learn from reason, experience, Scripture and truth.

John 6:51

Isa. 53:4

[1] From the Ninety-five Theses (Nos. 56 and 58, Vol. I, p. 35).

[2] See Vol. I, p. 19. Cf. above, pp. 40 ff., 63 f.

Therefore indulgences and the merits of Christ agree together as do life and death, day and night, Christ and Belial, the pope and a Christian. They have the right name, too; for indulgence[1] means "leaving off" or "remitting"; they "remit" everything good and "admit"[2] all misfortune; they leave sin unpunished, nay, they take away the penalty of sin, though God imposes and demands it. So far as possible, they let sins go free and do not prevent them, nay, they protect them and foster them, for they remit the penalty and permit money to be given and taken instead. For this reason St Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, calls the pope a man of sin and child of perdition, because he permits sin and encourages it, and thereby leads all the world with him to the devil by means of his lying, deceitful indulgences.

2 Thess. 2:3

Smitten on the head with this truth, and having no answer, they devise the dream that the merits of Christ can be applied in two ways. The one way is that just spoken of, i. e., they give life; the other way is that they render satisfaction for our sins. I answer, Yes; but they are also used in many other ways,—often to get money, to obtain high rank and honor, to secure luxury and ease, to seduce the world into war and bloodshed and all misery. Is there anything that is used more shamefully at Rome and in the whole Roman Church than Christ's name and merits? The pope, with all his knaves, would long ago have been a beggar if he had not had Christ to sell and to use as a cover for all his wiles. The name of Christ must now cover up all the ruin that the rule of Antichrist works in the whole world, as He Himself has prophesied in Matthew xxiv, "Many shall come in My name, and shall seduce many." It is thus that the indulgences come and the jugglers who sell them, in the name of Christ and of His merits, and seduce the whole world, so that even the elect are scarcely safe from them.

Matt. 24:5

Matt. 24:24

[1] German Ablass.
[2] German zulassen, "open the door to."

THE EIGHTEENTH ARTICLE

Indulgences are a pious fraud practiced upon Christians; they are remissions of good works, and belong to the things that are allowed but not expedient.[1] 1 Cor. 6:12

Some of those who recognised the worthlessness of indulgences, but did not venture to oppose the doctor of sins at Rome, have had a proverb which said that the indulgences are "a pious fraud," that is to say, although they were really of no use, and deceived the people, nevertheless they were a cause for the contribution of money, which was thought a good work; thus they served a good and divine purpose, though they were a fraud. At that time I agreed with these men and said the same thing, for then I knew no better.

But now that the holy father pope bids me recant, and condemns this article, I will be obedient and say, I confess my error; the article is not true. I now say, The indulgences are not a pious fraud, but a hellish, devilish, antichristian fraud, theft and robbery whereby the Roman Nimrod[2] and teacher of sin sells the whole world sin and hell, and sucks out and entices away everybody's money as the price of these unspeakable injuries. If this recantation is not enough, I will improve on it another time.

I prove it as follows: God says in the lxxxviii Psalm, "I will visit their sin with rods, and punish their iniquity with the stripes of men," and St Paul says in I Corinthians xi, "If we punish ourselves, God will not punish us; but when He punisheth us, He chasteneth us, that we may not be condemned with this world." Here you see that sin must be punished, either by God, by man, or by our own selves, if we are not to be condemned with this world. Yet Ps. 89:32 1 Cor. 11:38 f.

[1] From the Disputation of John Eck and Martin Luther of 1519 (Weimar, Ed., II, 356).
[2] Cf. Vol. II, p. 171.

the pope would blind our eyes to these clear texts, and by means of his indulgences cause all sin to go unpunished, so that we may be condemned with this world, as St Paul here says. This abomination he wishes to cover with Christ's merits, and then sell it, and Christ's merits must serve him while he flies in the face of this clear word of God. O pope, O pope! Pray stop somewhere!

THE NINETEENTH ARTICLE

Indulgences do not avail for the remission of the punishment or penalty which divine justice demands for actual sins.[1]

THE TWENTIETH ARTICLE

They are deceived who believe that indulgences are salutary, and profitable to the soul.[2]

THE TWENTY-FIRST ARTICLE

Indulgences are necessary only for those who are guilty of public mortal sins, and are really granted only to the slothful and the weaklings.[3]

THE TWENTY-SECOND ARTICLE

There are six kinds of men for whom indulgences are neither necessary nor useful,—the dead, the sick, those who are legitimately prevented from getting them, those who are without mortal

[1] From the Disputation of Eck and Luther of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 357).
[2] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 587).
[3] From the same (Weimar Ed., I, 609, 612).

sins, those whose mortal sins are not public, and those who do better works.[1]

In honor of the holy and highly learned bull, I recant everything that I have taught about indulgences and I am most heartily sorry for every good thing that I have ever said about them. Do not be disturbed, good people, when the pope here pretends that indulgences are profitable to men's souls and save them. That is a doctrine that has never been heard before; even the pope himself has never heard of it. The old dragon out of the abyss of hell is speaking in this bull. Let us hold fast to the truth that the indulgences are not what the pope pretends they are, for no sin can go unpunsished, as has been said.[2] If an angel from heaven says otherwise, we are not to believe him. If my books have deserved to be burned, it is assuredly because on the question of indulgences I have played into their hands. I have yielded too much to the pope and his followers. I myself condemn such doctrine to the flames.

Rev. 17:8

Gal. 1:8

THE TWENTY-THIRD ARTICLE

Excommunication is only an external penalty, and does not deprive men of the common prayers of the Church.[3]

Behold how the pope strives to be God. In the preceding articles he has assumed authority to save souls by means of indulgences, and in this article he assumes authority to damn souls by means of the ban. Neither of these things can be done by any creature, but only by the high divine Majesty. St Paul prophesied of him, "He will sit and rule in the Church of God, and give it out that he is God; he will oppose and exalt himself against everything that is God."

2 Thess. 2:4

---

[1] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 552).

[2] See above, p. 42.

[3] From the Sermon on Excommunication of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 639). Cf. Vol. II, pp. 38 ff.

This article I have defended sufficiently in the Treatise on the Ban,[1] and will only say briefly that Christianity consists in faith, which neither pope nor devil can give or take away. While faith remains, nothing can harm us—not death, nor hell, nor even the sin that we have com-
Rom. 8:28 mitted—as St Paul says in Romans viii, "All things work for good to believers, or Christians." Therefore the ban can be nothing more than an external penalty, that is, a separation from the congregation, from the Church and the sacraments. Even the pope says in his law,[2] taking care for once to teach us something good, that the ban is medicine, not destruction; therefore it can do us no inner harm, but only help us and make us better.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH ARTICLE

Christians should be taught to love the ban rather than fear it.[1]

This is condemned because the pope wishes to remain God and to have everyone fear him more than the high and true Majesty. But this article is already proved by what has been said. Since the ban is a penalty for sin and a medicine for the soul, he who has deserved it ought willingly and gladly to bear it, though, to be sure, he ought to fear the sin by which he might deserve the ban; just as a child ought to fear to do wrong, but, if it does wrong, ought to suffer the penalty gladly and kiss the rod. If it is God's will that we gladly suffer death and love all suffering, how much the more ought we to love and gladly to receive this gentle and motherly rod. The pope and his Church are an exception. It is right for them to be afraid of their own
Prov. 28:1 blindness, as it is written, "The unchristian sinners are afraid, and no man pursueth them."

---

[1] Vol. II, pp. 37 ff.

[2] The canon law. Cf. In VI to, lib. v, tit. xi, c. 1, Cum medicinalis.

[3] From the German Treatise Concerning the Ban of 1520 (Vol. II, p. 47).

THE TWENTY-FIFTH ARTICLE

The Roman bishop, St Peter's successor, is not by Christ's appointment vicar of Christ over all the churches of the world.[1]

This, too, is one of the chief doctrines which abolish the holy Gospel and set up a graven image in Christ's place in the Church. Against it I have set this article, and still maintain it, and I prove it as follows.

First, Since everything that is done in the Church is prophesied in clear, plain passages of Scripture, it is surely a wonder that nothing is plainly said in the whole Bible about the papacy, seeing they wish the papacy to be considered the greatest, most necessary, most characteristic thing in the Church. It is a suspicious circumstance and makes a bad impression that so many matters of smaller importance are based upon so many strong and clear passages of Scripture, while for this one doctrine no one has been able, down to the present day, to point to a single clear passage. It is clearly stated in the Gospel that St Peter is a fisherman and an apostle, but they hold this to be a matter of small importance compared with the papacy, though there is not a single letter to say that St Peter is over all the churches in the world.

I wish it understood, however, that I do not hold to this article because I wish to reject the pope. Let him have as much authority as he will, it makes no difference to me; I can grant him that. But there are two things I can neither endure nor keep silent about: first, that they torture and force and insult the holy Word of God in order to establish this authority, and second, that they revile and slander and curse the Greeks, and all who are not under the pope, as though they were not Christians,

[1] From the Defence Against the Malignant Judgment of John Eck of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 628). On this subject see The Papacy at Rome, Vol. I, pp. 337 ff.

As if Christianity were bound to the pope and to Rome, when St Paul and Christ have bound it only to faith and to God's Word, of which no one knows less or has less than the pope and his followers. And yet, though without faith and God's Word, he wishes to be not only a Christian, but the Christians' god, and to condemn all those who do not worship him, no matter how perfect their faith and their Gospel.

Moreover, if the pope were reasonable, he would prefer to have less trouble, and would not load all the business of the world on his own shoulders. It is surely impossible that the whole world can be bound to one place, and transact all its business there.

The Rock Not St Peter

But let us see how they torture and insult the holy words of God to establish their falsely alleged authority. Christ says to St Peter in Matthew xvi, "Thou art Peter—that is, a rock—and on this rock I will build My Church, and to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Here they interpret the rock to mean St Peter, and pretend that it is the papal authority on which Christ builds His Church, and that all churches ought, therefore, to be subject to the pope's authority. In the teaching of these masters the Church built on the rock means the Church that is subject to the pope. This interpretation[1] of His words Christ has been compelled to suffer these many years.

Matt. 16:18

To bring their lies and rascality clearly to light, and to make them blush for shame, we will examine Christ's words. If to build the Church upon the rock is nothing else than to be subject to the pope, as they say, it follows that the Church can be built and exist without faith, without the Gospel, and without any sacraments (for what is built is built, and needs no more building). The authority of the pope is one thing, and faith, sacraments and Gospel are quite another thing; if, therefore, the Church is built

[1] Luther says, "This gloss." See Vol. II, p. 67, n. 1.

on the pope's authority, it is evident that for the building of it the pope's authority and obedience thereto are sufficient, and faith is not necessary, nor anything else; especially since the pope and his followers live, as a rule, without faith, Gospel or sacraments, nay, they despise them, like heathen, and yet his authority remains rock, building and Church, as they say. A fine explanation of Christ's words! If the papists have the power to make out of Christ's words anything they please, who will prevent someone else from saying that the rock and the building of the Church are an ass and a cow, or whatever else may come into his head?

Again, in this same passage, Christ speaks of this rock and of His Church, and says "the gates of hell shall have no power against it." Here Christ says plainly that against His rock, building and Church, the devils shall have no power. If, then, the rock is papal authority and the building is obedience to the same, how does it happen that the building of obedience has fallen and the gates of hell have prevailed against it? For all Christendom has fallen away from the pope—the Greeks, for example, the Bohemians, Africa and the whole Orient; nay, they never were built upon this rock. If, therefore, Christ, Who cannot lie, promises that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His building, and yet no one can deny that the Orient has fallen away, it follows that Christ speaks truly and the pope lies, and the building is not obedience to his authority, but something else, which the gates of hell have not been able to break down. Matt. 16:18

Nor can it be said that these people are no longer Christians because they do not obey the pope and are not built on him, since the pope himself and all his followers wish to be considered Christians, though they do not obey God in a single tittle, and live, for the most part, without faith. Hitherto they have been successful, with their lies, in maintaining that those who do not agree with them on this point are heretics and they themselves good Chris-

tians, though they do not agree with God and Christ on any point. Thus they make apes and fools of all the world, and define the terms "Christian" and "heretic" to suit themselves.

The Rock Christ

But we pass that by and take up the true meaning of these words. That the gates of hell prevail nothing against this building must mean that the devil has no power over it; and this takes place when the building stands in firm faith and without sin, for where faith is absent or sin is present, there the devil rules and prevails against the build-

1 Pet. 5:9 ing. Thus St Peter teaches us that we are to strive in a strong faith against the devil, who attacks the faith with all his might. It follows, then, that this rock is Christ

1 Cor. 10:4 Himself, for so St Paul calls Him in I Corinthians x, and the building is the believing Church, in which there is no sin, and to build is nothing else than to become a believer

1 Pet. 2:5 and grow in holiness, as St Peter also teaches in I Peter ii, that we are to be built, a spiritual building, on Christ the rock.

Because, therefore, the pope and his authority, and those, too, who obey him, live in sin and in horrible abuses, and are the subjects of the devil, as everyone sees, it must needs be a lying device that the rock and the building, which Christ puts beyond reach of the gates of hell, mean the papal authority and government, which the devil has brought into subjection to himself. Otherwise it would be impossible for the papal authority to do any evil, for Christ does not lie. But before our very eyes papal authority becomes devil's authority, and does and has often done evil.

Hither, then, ye papists, one and all! Crack this nut! This Scripture passage has gotten ahead of you; the citadel has been taken, the pope has fallen; he lies prostrate; he has no ground to stand on. For this saying of Christ has been the only ground on which the papacy has relied and built itself up these many years; and now its lies and falsehoods have been plainly shown. If we have gained

nothing else from the pope in this controversy, we have at least set this passage of Scripture free. Nay, this wins the battle and cuts off the head of the papacy, for this passage is stronger against him than for him. He who tells a single lie is assuredly not of God, and is to be suspected in everything. Because, then, the pope has lied about this fundamental doctrine and the passage of Scripture on which it is based, and has perverted God's Word and deceived the world with his false government, what St Paul says of him is certainly true, 2 Thess. 2:9 that the entrance of Antichrist shall be by the power of the evil spirit, who enters only by means of lies and false interpretations of Scripture. There you lie, then, dear pope! If you can get out of this predicament honestly, and make truth out of lies, I will admit that you have been made pope by God. All this is John Hus's[1] work, not Luther's; as it is written, Condemnat justus mortuus impios vivos.[2] Wisd. 4:16

It does not help the case to refer to some of the holy fathers who called St Peter the rock and foundation of the Church. First, because Christ's words take precedence of the words of all the saints; they have erred often, Christ never erred. Secondly, because no saint has ever yet said that the pope is this rock. They have called St Peter the rock, not because of his authority, but because of his faith, and if the pope will follow him in faith, we will call him too a rock, provided only the "rock" continue to be faith and do not become authority. But if he do not believe, he shall not be called a rock.

They allege yet another proof-text. It is in the last chapter of John, where Christ says three times to Peter, John 21:15 ff. "Peter, lovest thou Me?" and Peter answers three times, "Yea, Lord, I love Thee"; then said Christ, also three times,

---

[1] The Bohemian reformer, burned at the stake at Constance in 1415. See also Vol. II, p. 140, n. 1. Luther's meaning is that Hus, by his attacks on the papacy, overthrew the arguments for its supremacy.

[2] "The righteous man that is dead shall condemn the ungodly."

The Feeding of the Sheep

"Feed my sheep." They would use this passage to set the pope over all Christians; but there is no clear passage with which to prove so great a claim, and this one is very dark. It is not to be supposed, as has been said,[1] that God would have instituted so great a thing as they make the papacy to be, without a single clear passage of Scripture. Moreover, this passage too overthrows the papacy, as you may easily observe.[2]

For Christ here three times demands love from Peter before He commends the sheep to him; by which He clearly shows that the feeding of the sheep does not belong to him who has not love. Now since the pope and the papacy are without love, "feeding" cannot mean papacy; therefore it is a lie and a perverted gloss that the word "feeding" means the loveless government and authority of the papacy. If we are willing to allow Christ's words to be thus torn to pieces and distorted, I might as well say that the government of the Turk meant feeding the sheep. But if the words are to keep their true meaning, then there must be love, or there is no shepherd. Who can get around that?

The evil spirit has taught them, besides, that "to feed" means to preside. How will they prove it? Must we simply take their word for it and be satisfied when they puff themselves up and stick out their lips, and say, "We have so interpreted it; be silent and do not contradict"? Now I go a step farther and say, This word "to feed" is so spiritual in its meaning that even if the pope were as holy as St Peter, and taught and kept his canon law most diligently, he would not be a shepherd. "To feed" means to give the doctrine whereby the soul lives, namely, the faith and the Gospel. If the pope were to attend to this, he would have to live in constant expectation of death, and stake his soul for the sheep. So St Augustine has correctly interpreted the passage, "To feed means in this place, to give one's life for the sheep and for the Gospel; therefore Christ

[1] See above, p. 81.
[2] Cf. Vol. I, pp. 383 ff.

Himself interprets the passage immediately afterwards, and shows Peter the sufferings that he must endure in feeding the sheep, and that would be impossible for him without love."[1]

Therefore it is most disgusting that this noble, spiritual, strong and precious word of Christ is so shamefully tortured, and applied to the idle, gorgeous, luxurious authority of the papacy. The best application that they make of it refers it to the pope's laws, but by them the sheep are poisoned rather than fed. We accept, therefore, as Christ's meaning that which St Augustine also holds, namely, that in Peter all preachers are taught that they are not to preach unless they love Christ and are ready to give their lives for the sheep.

If "to feed" means to be pope, then the Church must be without a pope as often as a pope does not love and does not preach; and that is true, for where the Gospel is not preached, there is no Church, and this papacy is as useful to the Church as the fifth wheel to a wagon, nay, it is altogether harmful; but of this I will say more another time. Again, if to love and to feed meant papacy, there would have to be as many popes as there were men who loved and fed the sheep; it could not be otherwise. And this is the truth too; for whoever loves and feeds is a pope. Thus in every way the words of God, which the pope applies to himself, go against him. It does not help his case to say that the pope does not himself feed the sheep, but does the feeding through others. Why, then, is he not also pope through others? If to feed means to be pope, then he can just as well be pope through others as he can feed through others. If the one is impossible, so is the other. He must do his own feeding or he cannot himself be pope. The word "to feed" cannot be so milked and driven.[2]

Now I will prove that St Peter was under the other

[1] On the Gospel of John, 123, 5 (Migne, xxxv, 1967).
[2] i. e., Treated like a docile cow.

Acts 8:14 apostles and not over them. In Acts viii we read that the
St Peter and the Other Apostles apostles and elders sent St Peter and St John to Samaria to confirm the Christians there. If, then, St Peter was a messenger, subject to the others, why does his successor, nay, his persecutor,[1] the pope, claim to be subject to no one? If St Peter had been the superior by divine right, he should have sat in his chair, as the pope now does, and done the commanding and the sending, and not let himself be sent; he should rather have suffered ten deaths than allowed himself to be humiliated, contrary to God's ordinance. This the popes now do; they drown the whole world in blood before they will give up their supremacy.

They have not yet got rid of the difficulty; it smites them on the head and makes them reel; they know not what to answer, but they are not silent; they make great talk about the Arians[2] and how the Holy Ghost is not less than the Father, even though the Father has sent Him. But they do not see that this argument fits the case about as well as the papacy fits the Church. The Holy Ghost is not sent in His own person, like St Peter, but, with the Father and the Son, He sends Himself; that is, He reveals Himself in the
Wisd. 19:7 dove, in the clouds, in believing hearts, as the Wise Man says, and Augustine explains. Therefore the pope's sectaries must here confess that the pope is not sovereign, but equal with or beneath the others, if his government is to be godly and not devilish. It is against God and His holy Word that he exalts his wanton authority over all, when he ought to do no more than merely to allow us to exalt him.

The Scriptures clearly decide that St Peter never made
Acts 1:21 ff. or sent or gave commands to an apostle. Even with the aid of all the apostles he could not make St Matthias an apostle; but they got him from heaven, whereby Christ proves incontestably that all the apostles, made by Him alone, are equal, and ought also to make all bishops equal,

[1] Sein Nachfolger, ja sein Verfolger.
[2] Who denied the equality of Christ with the Father.

and unite them not under one authority and sovereignty, as the pope's sectaries would deceive us into thinking, but in the unity of faith, baptism, love and the Spirit, so that they would be one people, as St Paul teaches in Ephesians iv. O what an ado they would make if they could find that St Peter sent out an apostle, as we find that he was himself sent out! Nevertheless, they say our argument is not valid, and their fable is right. Herewith I think that I have brought sufficient proof to show that the papacy not only hangs in the air, without any foundation in Scripture, but also rages against the Scriptures.

Eph. 4:4 f.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH ARTICLE

The word of Christ to Peter, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," extends no further than to the things which Peter bound.[1]

Matt. 16:19

How gladly the pope would be a god, so as to turn Christ's words around and decree, "Whatsoever I bind and loose in heaven, thou shalt loose and bind on earth," and thus be able to bind what God looses and loose what God binds! Thus our God would be driven out, and could do nothing save what the pope willed. This is what happened in the days of John Hus. The pope commanded the angels in heaven to lead to heaven the souls of the pilgrims who died on the way to Rome.[2] Against this abominable outrage and worse than devilish presumption John Hus protested, and though he lost his life by it, he gained so much at least, that the pope has had to harp on another string, and for very shame has been compelled till now to refrain from this sacrilege. But the rogue still peeps from behind the mask, and because he had flown too high, and could not keep heaven and hell under his authority, he

The Pope's Power Only on Earth

[1] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 536).

[2] See KÖHLER, Luther und die Kirchengeschichte, p. 206; cf. Vol. II, p. 244, n. 1.

wishes to seize upon purgatory, and although he must confess that he cannot cast anyone into purgatory or bind him there, he wishes to loose those that are bound there and bring them out. If asked on what grounds he can do this, he says, "I am pope."

But enough of this! The words of Christ expressly declare that his authority is on the earth, not over it or under it; and the binding and the loosing are correlative. For the words are, "What thou bindest on earth," "what thou loosest on earth." The binding is as long and as broad as the loosing, and the latter reaches no farther than the former. Therefore we abide by the words of Christ and despise the papal sacrilege.

The Pope's Power No Greater than the Priest's

Moreover, all priests use these words of Christ when they absolve, and no absolution is granted except by virtue of this same word and promise of Christ. If, then, these words have one single meaning, why does the pope undertake to do by virtue of them more than the humblest priest?[1] If the words have one single meaning, then they also have one single virtue, and if that virtue allows the pope to reach into purgatory, it allows every priest to do the same. Lo, thus the pope tricks and seduces the whole world; he takes out of the divine Word what he will, though it belongs equally to everybody, and pretends to drink malmsey[2] out of the same cask from which others can scarcely get water. God's simple, single Word, with its one single virtue, is gold for him, but he will not let others pass it as copper. Cease, pope; the game has gone far enough.

It is another perilous treatment of this passage when the keys are used for the remission of penalties.[3] Christ did not give these words in order that St Peter might have authority to do anything, but they are given to our faith, which is to hold fast to them in order that our sins may be forgiven. St Peter is only a servant in this matter; he can hold these words up to us, but what he can do with

[1] See above, p. 61 ff.
[2] A rare and highly prized wine. Cf. Vol. I, p. 362.
[3] See above, p. 64.

them depends on our faith; he may remit penalty and guilt a thousand times over, and yet accomplish nothing unless I believe in it. Faith makes the keys effective and powerful, unbelief makes them ineffective and powerless. Without faith there is in them none of the authority which the pope assumes, deceiving both himself and us. If God Himself cannot give heaven to him who does not believe, how should the pope by means of the keys give it to him who does not believe? But the remission of penalty does not properly belong to the keys, for that is a public transaction, and there is no room in it for faith, which believes only invisible things, namely, the forgiveness of sins in the sight of God.

There have been some who have used this passage to make the Roman bishop a pope, because Christ says, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind shall be bound." But since all priests absolve by virtue of these same words, they cannot be the property of St Peter and the pope, but must belong to all in common, so that either all priests are popes, who absolve by virtue of these words, or else no one can absolve except the pope, if these words imply the papacy. The pope can no more make the absolution common property than he can make the papacy common property, for it is one and the same word, and "binding" and "papacy" are one and the same thing, as they say. Lo, thus they distort the holy words of God! What is common property is said to belong to the pope; what is given to our faith is used to confirm his authority and tyranny.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH ARTICLE

It is certain that neither the pope nor the Church has the power to establish articles of faith or commandments regarding morals or good works.[1]

[1] From the Explanation of the Articles Debated at Leipzig of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 427).

There is nothing I should be gladder to hear than what are these articles of faith and commandments of good morals and good works which the pope or the Church can set up, so that we might send the Holy Ghost and Christ to school and give them a sound thrashing because they have been so forgetful and negligent, and have not correctly and sufficiently taught us Christian faith and good works. Ye learned disciples of the pope, open the mouth of your wisdom and tell us what they are, will ye? Well, then, I shall tell you.

Matt. 24:15, 24 Christ foretold them in Matthew xxiv, "When ye shall see the abomination spoken of by Daniel, standing in the holy place, he that readeth let him understand," "there shall arise Christs and false prophets, and shall deceive many, and do such signs as to lead into error even the elect, if that were possible"; and St Paul, in I Timothy iv,

1 Tim. 4:1 ff. "The Spirit saith plainly that in the last days many of you shall depart from the faith, holding to erring spirits and devilish doctrines, and teaching lies, and having a scar in their conscience, forbidding marriage and commanding to abstain from food which God hath given for believers to enjoy."

Behold! Shall not the pope have power to set up doctrines and articles of faith, when this prophecy of him is so clear that even the spirits that inspire him are expressly mentioned?

Col. 2:8 Moreover, in Colossians ii, St Paul teaches us how we are to hear such doctrines, and says, "Beware, lest any man deceive you through vain philosophy and the deceitful appearance of human doctrine, and temporal commandments, which do not teach of Christ." Here we see that we are to listen only to Christ and flee from the commandments of men, which appear, indeed, as though they would make us righteous, but are only deceit and destruction of faith. Christ says, also, in Matthew xxiii, "Call no man master upon earth only one is your master, even Christ";

Matt. 23:10

Jas. 3:1 and St James commands, "Ye shall not be many masters,

beloved brethren." Even St Peter is not silent, and says in II Peter ii, "There shall come false teachers among you, who teach according to their own whim"; and there are countless other passages of the same sort. 2 Pet. 2:1

Hence it has come to pass that recently they made a masterly decree at Rome, establishing the holy article that the soul of man is immortal,[1] forgetting that in our common Creed we all say, "I believe in the life everlasting." Again, it was also decreed, with the help of Aristotle, the great light of nature, that the soul is the essential form of the body; and many more of these articles, which are perfectly becoming to the papal Church, enabling it to hold fast to human dreams and doctrines of devils, because it treads under foot and destroys Christ's doctrine and the faith.

But let us look at the source from which they derive the authority to make articles of faith and laws. "Not everything that is necessary," say they, "is written in the Bible; therefore Christ has committed this authority to the Church, as St John says in the last chapter of his Gospel, 'Many other signs did Christ which are not written in this book, and if everything were to be written, I believe the world would not contain the books that would be written.'" Here let us mark the high wisdom of the papal sectaries. John does not speak of all the signs of Christ, but of the many which he has not written. Moreover, he says these "are not written in this book," meaning his own book. He does not deny, nay, he confesses that they may have been written in the other books. But our teachers apply his words to the whole Bible, and now the Gospel of St John must mean the whole Bible. John 21:25

That, however, is not the worst. John says, Christ's signs are not all written, and our masters apply that to our deeds and their law, saying that not all these things are written. What think you? I opine that the pope's sectaries can interpret Scripture. Only listen to these masters of all Christians at Rome. Many of Christ's

[1] At the Lateran Council of 1512; see Vol. II, p. 107.

signs are not written in John's book, that is to say, The Bible does not tell us sufficiently what we ought to know and do. The Holy Ghost must tell the pope to give us more laws and doctrines. Lo, now you know why the Holy Ghost is given to the pope and to Christians.

St Paul and all the Scriptures teach that the Holy Ghost is given in order to fulfil the law, to decrease its burdens, to release us from it, and make us free, as he says in II
2 Cor. 3:6 Corinthians iv, "The letter of the law killeth, but the spirit
Rom. 8:2 giveth life," and in Romans viii, "The spirit of life hath freed me from the law, which brought me only sin and death." But the master of all Christians at Rome, with his sectaries, has another Holy Ghost, who increases the laws and binds them upon the people, taking them captive with man-made laws. Forgive me, my God, that I here name the name of Thy Holy Spirit! I know not what to think or what to say against this unspeakable abomination of the Antichrist at Rome, who treats Thy Word not only foolishly, but jestingly, as though it were a carnival-joke. O God, where are those who earnestly pray to Thee, and turn away Thine inconceivable wrath?

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH ARTICLE

If the pope, and the greater part of the Church with him, were to hold a certain opinion, and even though he were not in error, it would nevertheless not be sin or heresy to hold a different opinion, especially in things not necessary to salvation, until it had been either rejected or approved by a General Council.[1]

Why will they not allow me this article, since it speaks only of things not necessary to salvation? In regard to the Conception of our Lady they have allowed that it is

[1] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 583).

not heresy nor error when some hold that she was conceived in sin,[1] though Council, pope and the majority hold a different view, because this article is not necessary to salvation. How comes it, then, that we poor Christians must believe whatever the pope and his papists think, even when it is not necessary to salvation? Has the papal authority the power to make unnecessary things necessary articles of faith, and can it make heretics in things which are not necessary?

Therefore I must myself retract this article and condemn it to the flames. I have said in this article, very foolishly, that we need not believe the pope in regard to unnecessary things. I ought to have said, If the pope and his papists in a Council were so wanton and arbitrary as to waste time and money on unnecessary things, when it is the business of a council to deal only with the great and necessary matters, we ought not only not to obey them, but to consider them insane or malicious. When men make childish and unnecessary things out of the serious and necessary affairs of the suffering Church, what else are they doing except mocking poor and needy Christendom? It is just such foolishness and frivolity that they have, alas! committed in all these recent councils, when they dealt with indulgences and papacy, with sees and sovereignties, but with none of those things that were matters of necessity.

Yet the bull does right in giving the papists the unnecessary things to deal with and to believe, in their councils; for these mockers of the Church ought to be given over by the wrath of God to such a perverse mind that they do not take the necessary things to heart and are concerned only with unnecessary things; they deserve no better fate.

[1] The immaculate conception of the Virgin was a matter of serious dispute between the Dominican and Franciscan Orders. The Dominicans, relying on the authority of Thomas Aquinas, denied it; the Franciscans and their great theologian, Duns Scotus, affirmed it. In 1483 Sixtus IV (Constitution Grave nimis; text in MIRBT², No. 264) forbade either party to accuse the other of heresy on pain of excommunication, "since it has not yet been decided by the Roman Church or the apostolic see." See New Schaff-Herzog Encycl., V, 456.

THE TWENTY-NINTH ARTICLE

It has now become our right to destroy the power of the councils and to contradict their acts, also to sit in judgment on their laws, and to confess boldly whatever we think is true, regardless whether it is condemned or approved by any council.[1]

This article my papists call malignant and spiteful, as though I wished to teach that any man might arbitrarily and without reason resist the councils, a thought that was never either in my mind or on my pen; but I have said that when anything was decreed in a council contrary to Scripture, we ought to believe the Scriptures rather than the council. The Scriptures are our law and our reliance, whereby we can resist even an angel from heaven, as St Paul commands in Galatians i, let alone a pope and a council!

And why do they condemn me for this article? Why do they not condemn those who have set up this article and whom I have cited as my authorities, such as St Paul,
Gal. 1:8 in Galatians i, where he says, "If anyone teacheth you otherwise than ye have heard, even though it were an angel from heaven, let him be banned and accursed"? Hearken, ye papists! Paul curses an angel from heaven if he teaches differently from the Scriptures, and I am not to have the power to despise a man if he teaches differently! Why do ye not also condemn that chapter of Panormitanus,[2] Significasti, de Electione,[3] which I have cited,[4] in which he says that we are to believe a layman, if he presents plain Scripture or clear reason,

---

[1] From the Explanation of the Articles Debated at Leipzig of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 404, 406).

[2] Nicholas Tudeschi (1386–1445), one of the foremost commentators on the canon law.

[3] Decretal, Greg., lib. i, tit. 6, c. 4. Cf. Vol. II, p. 107, n. 3.

[4] Weimar Ed., II, 10.

rather than a pope or a council; and this opinion is shared by almost all the jurists, especially the ablest and most learned among them.

What other conclusion can be drawn from this article of the bull, except that human doctrine is above God's Word and the pope above God, and whatever abominations go along with this opinion? Lucifer was not guilty of so great sacrilege in heaven, for he did no more than presume to be equal with God. God help us! Has it come to this in the Church,—that we must hear that God and His Word are to give place to the pope and his law? It is time to suffer a hundred deaths instead!

THE THIRTIETH ARTICLE

Certain articles of John Hus, condemned at Constance, are most Christian, most true and altogether evangelical, and these the entire Church could not condemn.[1]

In truth, I have greatly erred on this point, and have already retracted[2] and condemned this article, in so far as I have said, "Certain articles of John Hus, etc." Therefore I now say, Not only certain articles, but all the articles of John Hus condemned at Constance are altogether Christian; and I confess that the pope and his followers acted in this matter like a very Antichrist, condemning the holy Gospel along with John Hus, and setting in its place the doctrine of the dragon from hell. This statement I offer to defend, if need be, by the help of God, and I will prove and maintain it.

St John[3] even did too little, and only began to set forth the Gospel; I have done five times as much, and yet I

[1] From the Leipzig Disputation of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 279).
[2] In the Operationes in Psalmos (Erl. Ed., op. exeg., xv, 359).
[3] i. e., John Hus.

fear that I have done too little. John Hus does not deny that the pope is sovereign in all the world; he only says[1] that a wicked pope is not a member of the holy Church, though he is to be endured as a tyrant by all the members of the holy Church; he must either be holy or become holy. But I say that if St Peter himself sat in Rome today, I would still deny that he was pope and over all other bishops by divine right. The papacy is a human invention of which God knows nothing. All churches are equal, and their unity consists not in this one sovereignty, but as
Eph. 4:4 ff. St Paul says, in Ephesians iv, in one faith, one baptism, one Lord, even Christ, and these things are all the common and equal property of all the parishes in the world.

Of the decretals, too, I say not that they are apocryphal, that is, things it is not necessary to hold, as John Wiclif[2] says, but that they are unchristian, Christ-resisting things, written by inspiration of the evil spirit; therefore I also burned them[3] with joyful heart.

THE THIRTY-FIRST ARTICLE

A righteous man sins in all his good works.[4]

This article vexes the great work-saints, who place their reliance not on God's mercy, but on their own righteousness, that is, on the sand; therefore it will happen to them
Matt. 7:26 f. as to the house built on the sand, in Matthew vii. But a righteous Chrisitan ought to learn and know that all his good works are impotent and insufficient in the sight of God; with all the dear saints he ought to despair of his

[1] In the Articles of John Hus condemned at Constance, Nos. 12, 13, 20, 22–24. MIRBT², 159.

[2] The English reformer (d. 1380) from whom Hus took the most of his theology. The reference here is to No. 38 of the 45 Articles of Wiclif condemned at Constance, Decretales epistolae sunt apocryphae, et seducunt a fide Christi, et clerici sunt stulti qui student eis. MIRBT², 158.

[3] Along with the bull to which he is here replying, December 10, 1520.

[4] From the Explanation of the Articles Debated at Leipzig (Weimar Ed., II, 416).

own works, and rely on the sole mercy of God with all confidence and firm trust. Therefore we desire to give this article a firm foundation, and see what the dear saints have to say about it.

Isaiah lxiv says, "We are all of us unclean, and all our righteousness is as a filthy stinking rag." Observe that the prophet excepts nobody, but says, "we are all of us unclean," and yet he was a holy prophet. Again, if our righteousness is unclean and a stench in God's nostrils, what will unrighteousness be? Moreover, he says "all righteousness," none excepted, So, then, if there is such a thing as a good work without sin, this prophet lies, which God forbid! Is not this passage of Isaiah clear enough? Why then do they condemn my article, which says nothing else than Isaiah says? Yet we are glad to be condemned in the company of the holy prophet. Isa. 64:6

Again, Solomon says in Ecclesiastes vii, "There is no man on earth so righteous that he doeth a good work, and sinneth not." I think this passage is clear enough, and it corresponds with my article almost word for word. And now that Solomon is here condemned, let us see how his father David must also be condemned, for he says, in Psalm cxliii, "Lord, enter not into judgment with me Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Who is God's servant except the man who does good works? How, then, does it happen that he may not endure God's judgment? Surely God's judgment is not unjust, If a work, then, were altogether good and without sin, it would not flee God's just judgment; thus the fault must, of necessity, be in the work, which is not pure; therefore no man living is justified in God's sight, but all men need His mercy, even in their good works. Here you papists ought to prove your learning not only by framing bulls, but by answering such passages of Scripture. Eccl Ps. 143:2

I have already proved, under the first two articles,[1] that all the saints struggle against their sinful flesh, and

[1] See above, pp. 25 ff.

thus continue to be sinners so long as they live in the flesh, which warreth against the spirit; therefore, at one and the same time, they serve God according to the spirit, and sin according to the flesh. If, then, a righteous man is at the same time justified by reason of the spirit, and sinful by reason of the flesh, the work must certainly be as the person, the fruit as the tree. In proportion as the spirit has part in the work, it is good; in proportion as the flesh has part in it, it is evil; for Christ says, "A good tree bears good fruit, an evil tree bears evil fruit." God always measures the work by the person, as is written in Genesis iv, "God had respect to Abel and his offering, but to Cain and his offering He had not respect." First come Abel and Cain, afterwards their offerings. Here too, then, because the person is not altogether pure, the work can never be altogether pure. If the master of the work[1] is not altogether good, the work can never be altogether good. Every work must be like its master, as all reason and experience teach.

Matt. 7:17

Gen. 4:4 f.

But, if they say, as they are wont,[1] "Yes, but this impurity is not sin, but an imperfection, or weakness, or defect," I answer, It is indeed a defect and a weakness, but if that is not sin, then I am willing to say that murder and adultery are not sins, but defects and weaknesses. Who has given you papists authority thus to twist God's Word, and to call the impurity of a good work weakness and not sin? Where is there a single letter of Scripture on your side? Must we believe your evil dreams without Scripture, when ye will not believe our clear Scriptures? Does not everyone know that there is no hindrance in the sight of God except the hindrance of sin? As saith Isaiah lix, "Your sins have separated you from your God." If, then, David says that even God's servants cannot endure His judgment and no man living is justified in His sight, then this weakness must assuredly be sin, and he who will not allow that any living man is justified, assuredly includes

Isa. 59:2

Ps. 143:2

[1] Cf. Treatise on Good Works, Vol. I, 187 ff.
[2] Cf. above, pp. 31 ff.

these too who walk in good works, unless, indeed, they are not men and are not living.

Again, Augustine says[1] in his Confessions, "Woe to every human life, though it were the most praiseworthy, if it were to be judged without mercy." Behold how the great heretic, St Augustine, speaks against this holy bull, so boldly and sacrilegiously that he attributes sin not only to a good life, but condemns even the very best life—which abounds in good works, beyond all doubt—if judged without mercy, as though it were nothing but mortal sin. O St Augustine, dost thou not fear the most holy father pope? St Gregory too speaks of that holy man Job[2] thus, "The holy man Job saw that all our good works are Job 9:3
nothing but sin, if God judges them; therefore, he says, 'If anyone will contend with God, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand.'" Who says this? Thou, Gregory? Dost thou dare to say that all our good works are nothing but sin? Thou art under the pope's ban, and a heretic far worse than Luther. He only says that there is sin in all good works; thou makest them out to be nothing but sin. I see plainly that thou hast no will to be canonised by the most holy father pope, whom thou contradictest and makest a heretic and Antichrist in this his holy bull.

The same St Gregory says further, on the same chapter,[3] "We have now said many times that all human righteousness will be found to be unrighteousness, if strictly judged. Therefore Job says, 'Though I had done something right- Job 9:15
eous, I will not answer God, to contend with Him, but make supplication to Him as my Judge.'" Now God's judgment is not false or unjust, but true and just. If it finds unrighteousness in our righteousness, that unrighteousness cannot be imaginary, but must really be there, and be not merely a defect or weakness, but a damnable sin, which prevents salvation, unless mercy intervenes, and out of sheer grace accepts and rewards the works.

---

[1] Cf. above, p. 54.
[2] Moralia, Bk. IX, c. 2. [3] Ibid., c. 28.

If these passages do not help my article, then may God help it! I would far rather be condemned with Isaiah, David, Solomon, Paul, Augustine and Gregory, than praised with the pope and all the bishops and papists, even though all the world were only pope, bishops and papists. O blessed is he that should die for these things! Amen.

THE THIRTY-SECOND ARTICLE

The very best good work[1] is a venial sin.[2]

This article follows evidently out of the preceding, for
Ps. 143:2 David does not say "In Thy sight shall no man living be worthily rewarded," but "In Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Now to be "not justified" is nothing else than to be damned. And Augustine[3] says not "Woe to some good lives," but "Woe to the most praiseworthy life, if it is judged without grace"; this "woe," too, means nothing else than damnation. St Gregory does not say "All human righteousness is imperfect," but "All human righteousness will be judged to be unrighteousness"; and again, he does not say "All good works are sinful," but "All good works are really sin." Therefore I must retract this article too, and say,—

The very best good work is a venial sin according to God's merciful judgment, and a mortal sin according to His strict judgment. Behold how the most holy father drives me to such strange contradictions by this bull, in which he feeds the sheep of Christ by teaching them not to recognise their sin, themselves, nor God's judgment, and not to sigh for God's mercy, but to run at God with their horns proudly in the air, and gallop into the abyss of hell. Woe to thee, Antichrist!

---

[1] Aufs allerbest gethan (optime factum).
[2] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 608).
[3] See above, pp. 54, 101.

THE THIRTY-THIRD ARTICLE

The burning of heretics is contrary to the will of the Holy Spirit.[1]

This I prove, first of all, by history, for from the beginning until now the Church has never yet burned a heretic, and never will, though in ancient times there were so many heretics, of so many kinds. I prove it, in the second place, out of their own words, for if a pope or a bishop is a heretic, they only depose him and do not burn him, as their own law[2] teaches, which they claim has come from the Holy Spirit. In the third place, they have no Scripture by which to prove that the burning of heretics is the will of the Holy Spirit.

But if they say that John Hus and Jerome of Prague were burned at Constance, I reply that I was speaking of heretics. John Hus and Jerome of Prague, good Christians, were burned by heretics and apostates and antichristians,—the papists,—for the sake of the holy Gospel, as I said above.[3] After this example the pope and his heresy-hunters have burned other good Christians in other places, according to the prophecy concerning Antichrist, that he will cast Christians into the oven. On this wise Pope Alexander VI caused the burning of that good man of Florence, Jerome Savonarola,[4] the Dominican, and his brethren. That is the way the holy Church of the papists doeth God service. It were pity if they did any better. John 16:2

Isaiah ii and xi describe the Christian Church as without bloodshed, and say, "They shall change their swords into ploughshares and their spears into sickles or scythes, and shall not slay nor hurt in my holy mountain," that is, in Christendom; and in Luke ix, when the disciples wished to call down fire from heaven upon the city that would Isa. 2:4; 11:6 ff. Luke 9:54 ff.

---

[1] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 624).
[2] The canon law; see C. 2, in VIto de poen. V, 9.
[3] See page 97.
[4] The Florentine reformer, burned for heresy, 1498.

not give Him shelter, Christ rebuked them and said, "Know ye not of what spirit ye are the children? The Son of man is not come to slay the people, but to save them." The papists ought to reply to these passages of Scripture; but instead they boast of their authority and would force us to admit that their thoughts and deeds are right, even when they are contrary to the Scriptures, and be satisfied with that.

Thus, too, it is strictly forbidden in the canon law that the clergy shall carry arms and weapons, and yet no one pours out more Christian blood than the most holy father, the pope, who now feeds the sheep of Christ with iron, and guns, and fire, and is worse than the Turk. He embroils kings and princes, lands and cities, but that does not make him a heretic or a murderer, or a tyrant, but he is Christ's vicar, and he grants indulgences and sends out legates and cardinals in the interest of the war against the Turk.[1] His papists excuse their graven image and idol, saying that the pope does not go to war nor burn anybody, but sits in his holy chair at Rome and prays—complines,[2] perhaps—and only commands the temporal power to fight and burn. That is just what the Jews did. They gave Christ over to Pilate and the Gentiles to crucify, but they themselves, like great saints, would not enter Pilate's house; yet St Stephen, in Acts viii, called them murderers of Christ, and died for it. Thus, because I have called the pope the greatest murderer the world has borne since its foundation, who murders both body and soul, I am a heretic, God be praised! in the eyes of his holiness and his papists.

John 18:28

Acts 7:52

The last Babylon is now like the first, and what the mother lacked the daughter has made up. The first Babel too defended its faith with fire only, and burned Christ's ancestors, as Genesis xi shows; this Babylon of Rome burns Christ's children, for the evil spirit knows full

Gen. 11:1 f.

[1] Cf. Vol. II, p. 85.

[2] The last of the daily offices, the bed-time prayers.

well that if the pope were to defend himself in books[1] he could not abide for an instant, and would be judged the very dregs of all heresy, and Antichrist. To protect himself against what others write he has resorted to fire and outrageous tyranny, and now the one Babylon is as holy as the other.

They taunt me, asking why I am timid and do not come to Rome.[2] As if Christ ran of His own accord to Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod, and begged them to kill Him. I thought it enough to stand my ground and not flee, and to wait for them where I am till they fetched me, as they did Christ, and led me whither they would. But they say I ought to have run after them, and urged them to kill me; they put everything so cleverly! Why are they not so bold as to refute my writings or to come to me and conquer me with their lofty wisdom? Ah well, let the blind be blind!

THE THIRTY-FOURTH ARTICLE

To make war against the Turks is nothing else than to strive against God, Who is punishing our sins by means of the Turks.[3]

How shamefully the pope has this long time baited us with the war against the Turks,[4] gotten our money, destroyed so many Christians and made so much mischief! When will we learn that the pope is the devil's most dangerous cat's-paw? Was it not the pope that set good King Ladislas[5] of Hungary and Poland, with so many thousand Christians, upon the Turks, and was he not terribly beaten at Varna because he obeyed the pope, and at his bidding broke the treaty he had made with the Turk? For to teach

[1] Or "the Scriptures."
[2] Whither he had been repeatedly summoned. See Introduction, above, p. 7.
[3] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 535).
[4] Cf. Vol. II, p. 85.
[5] Cf. Vol. II, p. 139, and n. 1.

concerning perjury, that the pope has power to break an oath, is no heresy. How can a man become a heretic if he can do anything he pleases? Again, what misery has recently come to Hungary through this same Turkish war, begun with a papal indulgence! And yet we must continue to be blind so far as the pope is concerned!

Now I set up this article not meaning to say that we are not to make war against the Turk, as that holy heresy-hunter, the pope, here charges me, but to say that we should first make ourselves better and cause God to be gracious to us; not plunge in, relying on the pope's indulgence, with which he has deceived Christians heretofore and still deceives them. The histories of the Old Testament, especially Joshua vii and Judges xviii, and many more passages, show us what it is to fight against an angry God and against an enemy whom we have deserved. The pope does nothing more, with his crusading indulgences[1] and his promises of heaven, than lead Christians' lives into death, and their souls in a great crowd to hell, as befits the true Antichrist. God is not concerned about crosses[2] and indulgences and wars. He will have our lives to be good; and from goodness the pope and his followers flee more than from anything else; and yet he would devour the Turk. That is why our war against the Turk is so successful, and where he formerly had one mile he now has a hundred miles of land; but we do not see it, so completely have we been taken captive by the Roman leader of the blind.

Josh. 7:1 ff. Judg. 20:12 ff.

THE THIRTY-FIFTH ARTICLE

Because of the secret vice of pride no one is certain that he does not continually commit mortal sin.[3]

---

[1] See Vol. I, p. 18.
[2] Worn by the crusaders.
[3] From the Resolutiones of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 553).

This article is clear enough from the thirty-first and thirty-second.[1] For David says, "Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant; in Thy sight shall no man living be justified"; and St Gregory at the end of his Moralia, "How can we ever be saved, when our evil works are pure evil, and our good works never pure good?" Again, Job ix says, "Though I were righteous, even this my soul doth not know," and again, "I am afraid in all my works, for I know Thou sparest no sinner." Commenting on this, St Gregory says,[2] "What I have done openly, I see; but what I have suffered secretly, I know not." That is to say, No one can sufficiently know his secret pride, as this same teacher says many times, and by it all works are made unclean, and cannot endure God's just judgment, as David also says, in Psalm xviii, "Lord cleanse me from my secret sins; who can understand them all?"

Ps. 143:2
Job. 9:21
Job. 9:28
Ps. 19:12

Therefore I must retract this article too, and now say, No one ought to doubt that all our good works are mortal sins,[3] if they are judged according to God's severe judgment, and not accepted as good out of pure grace, so that the saying of St Paul in Romans iii may stand, "The Scripture concludeth us all under sin, so that all the world may be guilty before God, and know that no one can be justified by good works, but that God hath mercy upon all, and justifieth them solely out of grace." That is the true Christian doctrine, which teaches a man to fear and trust God; therefore he can love and praise God, because he despairs of himself and relies for everything good upon the grace of God. This love and praise and fear of God, and this faith the pope and his papists think to destroy throughout the world; nay, he has done and is daily doing it, as says Micha ii, "Ye have taken away My praise from them forever."

Rom. 3:19 f.
Mic. 2:9

---

[1] See above, pp. 98 ff.
[2] Moralia, Bk. IX, c. 53.
[3] Cf. above, p. 102.

THE THIRTY-SIXTH ARTICLE

Since the fall of Adam, or after actual sin, free will exists only in name, and when it does what it can, it commits mortal sin.[1]

This article ought to be clear enough from those that
Rom. 14:23 precede because St Paul says, in Romans xiii, "Everything that is not of faith is sin." What has become of freedom,
Freedom of the Will then, if it cannot of its own power do anything else than sin? Again, St Augustine says in his work On the Spirit and the Letter, chapter iv,[2] "The free will, without God's grace, has no power except to sin." What say you now, pope? Is it freedom to be without power except for evil? You might as well call a lame man straight, though he can only limp, and never walk straight. That is just as if I were to call the pope most holy, though St Paul calls him homo peccati et
Matt. 24:15 filius perditionis,[3] and Christ, abominatio,[4] the head of all sin and destruction. The papists have so perverted all words, produced a new language, and confused everything, like the builders of Babel, that white must be called black and black white, to the unspeakable injury of the Church.

2 Tim. 2:25 Paul says, in II Timothy ii, "Instruct those that oppose the truth; peradventure God will give them repentance, that they acknowledge the truth, and return from the snares of the devil, by whom they are taken captive at his will." Where is the free will here when the captive is of the devil, not indeed unable to do anything, but able to do only what the devil wills? Is that freedom, to be captive at the devil's will, so that there is no help unless God grant
John 8:33 ff. repentance and improvement? So also says John viii, When the Jews said they were free, Christ said, "Verily

[1] From the Heidelberg Theses of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 354).
[2] Migne Ed., xliv, 203.
[3] "Man of sin and son of perdition" (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3).
[4] "The abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15).

I say unto you, all they who sin are servants or possessions of sin; if the son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." So St Augustine changes the term "free will," in his work Against Julian,[1] book ii, and calls it servum arbitrium, "a will in bondage."

Again, Moses says in Genesis vi and viii, "Everything that the heart of man thinks and desires is only evil at all times." Hearken to that, dear papists; Moses opens his mouth against you, what will you say in reply? If there is a good thought or will in men at any time, then we must accuse Moses of lying, for he calls all the times, all the thoughts, all the desires of the human heart evil. What kind of freedom is it that is inclined only to evil? Gen. 6:3; 8:21

To bring the matter to an end; it has been said more than once above[2] that the righteous and holy men who live in God's strong grace, war against their own flesh, with great pains and peril, and the flesh, with all its nature, fights against grace. Is it not, then, a blind and grievous error when one dares to teach that the will is by nature free and can, without grace, turn to the spirit, seek grace and desire it, although it flees from grace, nay, rages against it, when grace is present. Whose reason is not shocked to think that although spirit and flesh are the two greatest of enemies, yet the flesh is said to desire and seek its enemy, the spirit, when every man feels in himself how all his powers fight against grace to drive it out and destroy it? It is the same as saying, No one can bind a wild and ravenous beast with bands, but when it is free, it binds itself and goes of its own accord into bonds! **Flesh and Spirit**

Such teachings, therefore, are invented only to insult and overthrow the grace of God, to strengthen sin and increase the kingdom of the devil. The Scriptures say of man, in Genesis vi, that he is altogether flesh, and the flesh is most directly opposed to the spirit, according to Galatians v. And yet they so mingle them that the free will, which is mere flesh, is said to seek the spirit. The folly and blind- Gen. 6:3 Gal. 5:17

[1] Migne Ed., xliv, 689. [2] See pp. 25 ff.

ness of the pope and his followers could be tolerated, to be sure, in other matters, but in this chief article of faith it is a pity that they are so senseless, for by it they entirely destroy everything that we have from God through Christ, so that St Peter rightly prophesied of them, in II Peter ii,

2 Pet. 2:1 "There shall be false teachers among you, who shall deny the Lord that bought them." Who is the Lord but Christ, Who hath bought us with His own precious blood? Who denies Him more than those who ascribe too little to His grace and too much to the free will? For because they will not allow that to be sin and evil which is truly sin and evil, neither will they allow that to be grace which is grace and by which sin is to be driven out; just as he who will not admit that he is sick will not allow medicine to be medicine for him.

Man Altogether Sinful

Even though they were right, it would still be safer if they left all good to grace alone and allowed all our doings to be sin. There is no danger in confessing before God that a good work is sin, and therefore seeking His grace, which I cannot seek too much; but there is cruel danger in confessing a thought to be good if it is not good. Because, then, they seek the dangerous path, follow it and defend it so stubbornly, and leave the safe path, nay, persecute those that walk in it, it is easy to observe that their doctrine is not of God, but altogether suspicious.

Therefore I wish that the word "free will" had never been invented. It is not in the Scriptures, and it were better to call it "self-will," which profiteth not. Or, if anyone wishes to retain it, he ought to apply it to the new-created man,[1] so as to understand by it the man who is without sin. He is assuredly free, as was Adam in Paradise, and it is of him that the Scriptures speak when they touch upon our freedom; but they who lie in sins are unfree and prisoners of the devil; yet because they can become free through grace, you can call them men of free will, just as you might call a man rich, although he is a beggar, because he can become rich. But it is neither right nor good thus to juggle

[1] i. e., The "new creature" that is growing up to the perfection of heaven.

with words in matters of such great seriousness; for a simple man is easily deceived by it, and teachers of this kind are called sophists, of whom Ecclesiasticus xxxiv says, "I have observed many things from many words, and have found the uses of words strange and wierd; sometimes I have been in deadly peril of soul because of these things, but the grace of God has delivered me." We ought, therefore, to avoid the sophists, and speak, especially concerning the lofty things of God, simply, clearly and plainly, as do the Scriptures. This error about the free will is a peculiar teaching of Antichrist; therefore it is no wonder that it is spread so far throughout the world, for Antichrist is to seduce the whole world, as it is written of him, and but few Christians shall stand before him. Woe to him!

Ecclus. 34:12 ff.

2 Thess. 2:10

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH ARTICLE

That there is a purgatory cannot be proved by those Scriptures[1] which are approved and trustworthy.[2]

I have never yet denied that there is a purgatory, and I still hold that there is, as I have many times written and confessed, though I have no way of proving it incontrovertibly, either by Scripture or reason. I find in the Scriptures, indeed, that Christ, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Job, David, Hezekiah and some others tasted hell in this life. This I think to be purgatory, and it is not incredible that some of the dead suffer in like manner. Tauler[3] has much to say about it, and, in a word, I have decided for myself that there is a purgatory, but cannot force any others to the same decisison.

There is only one thing that I have attacked, namely, the way in which they apply to purgatory passages of Scripture so inapplicable that it becomes ridiculous. So

[1] Latin, "Canonical Scriptures" (quae sit in canone).
[2] From the Leipzig Disputation of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 324).
[3] The German mystic (d. 1361). On Luther's relation to Tauler, see Cohrs in Prot. Realencyk., xix, 454, and Böhmer, Luther², pp. 56 ff.

Ps. 66:12 they apply Psalm lxv, "We went through fire and water," though the whole Psalm sings of the sufferings of the saints, which no one places in purgatory. Again, St Paul, in 1 Cor. 3:13 ff. I Corinthians iii, says of the fire of the last day that it will prove the good works, and by it some shall be saved because they keep the faith, though their work may suffer loss. Of this fire also they make purgatory, according to their custom of twisting the Scriptures and making of them what they will.

Thus, too, they have drawn in by the hair that passage Matt. 12:32 in Matthew xii, in which Christ says, "Whoso speaketh blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." Christ means by this that it shall never be forgiven him, Mark 3:29 as Mark iii explains His meaning, saying, "He that sinneth against the Holy Ghost by blasphemy hath no forgiveness forever, but is guilty of an eternal sin." To be sure, even St Gregory interprets the word in Matthew xii to mean that some sins will be forgiven in the world to come, but St Mark does not allow that interpretation to stand, and he counts for more than all the doctors.

I have said all this so that we may know that no one is bound to believe more than what is based on Scripture, and those who do not believe in purgatory are not to be called heretics, if in other respects they hold the entire Scriptures, as the Greek Church does. The Gospel compels me to believe that St Peter and St James are saints, but it is not necessary to believe that St Peter is buried at Rome and St James at Compostella[1] and their bodies are still there, for that the Scriptures do not tell us. Again, there is no sin in holding that none of the saints whom the pope canonises are saints, and the saints take no offence at that, for there are many saints in heaven of whom we do not know that they exist at all, still less that they are saints; and they take no offence at that, and do not think us heretics because of it. The pope and his sectaries play

[1] In Spain; see Vol. I, p. 191, n. 1.

this game only that he may set up many wild articles of faith, beside which the true articles of the Scriptures are silenced and suppressed.

But their use of the passage in II Maccabees xii, about how Judas Maccabaeus sent money to Jerusalem to buy prayers for those who fell in battle, proves nothing, for that book is not among the books of Holy Scripture, and, as St Jerome says,[1] it is not found in the Hebrew tongue, in which all the books of the Old Testament are found. In other respects too this book has little authority, for it contradicts the first book of Maccabees in its description of King Antiochus, and contains many more fables which destroy its credibility. And even though the book were authoritative, it would yet be necessary in the case of so important an article that at least one passage out of one of the chief books should come to its help, that every word might be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. It is a suspicious circumstance that on this subject alone there should be found in the whole Bible no more than one passage, and that in the least important, most despised book, if it is so great a matter, and so much depends upon it that the papacy and the whole priesthood are all but built upon it, and derive all their wealth and honor from it. Without doubt the majority of the priests would starve if there were no purgatory. They ought not to offer to faith such weak and fallible grounds.

2 Macc. 12:43

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH ARTICLE

Souls in purgatory are not sure of their own salvation, at least not all of them; nor is it proved by Scripture or reason that they acquire no more merit and do not grow in love toward God.[2]

[1] See Prot. Realencyk., i, 648.

[2] From the Leipzig Disputation of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 161, 342).

THE THIRTY-NINTH ARTICLE

Souls in purgatory sin continually, because they seek for rest and flee from penalty.[1]

THE FORTIETH ARTICLE

Souls released from purgatory by the prayers of the living have less reward than if they themselves made satisfaction.[2]

These three articles I have discussed only in an academic way,[3] and have often confessed that they were merely opinions of mine, but that I give no definite proof for them. What I think about them can be read in my *Resolutiones*.[4] The papists and bullists condemn me for them, and advance no other argument except their own arbitrary opinion, formed[5] without Scripture or reason, and they do not reply to my Scriptures and reason. But I do not allow this to worry me and I despise their mere condemnation as much as they despise my grounds and reasons. The pope and his bullists know less of these things than a log on the ground.

My advice is that no one allow the pope to set up new articles, but be willing to remain in ignorance, with St Augustine,[6] about what the souls in purgatory are doing and what their condition is. It is enough for us to know that they are in great and intolerable pain, and crave our help. But if you wish to discuss the question, then leave room for surmise and opinion, as I do; do not make an article of faith out of your own idea, as does that abomina-

---

[1] From the *Resolutiones* of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 562).
[2] From the *Leipzig Disputation* of 1519 (Weimar Ed., II, 340).
[3] i. e., In academic arguments, where opinions might be tentatively expressed.
[4] The *Resolutiones* of 1518 (Weimar Ed., I, 530 ff.).
[5] Literally, "Blown up like a bubble" (*aufgeblasen*).
[6] In the *Enchiridion*, c. 109 (Migne Ed., xl, 283).

tion at Rome, so that your faith do not, perchance, become a dream. Hold to the Scriptures and the Word of God. There is the truth; there you will be safe; there is trustworthiness and faith, entire, pure, sufficient and constant.

THE LAST ARTICLE

The prelates of the Church and the secular princes would do no wrong if they blotted out all the beggars' sacks.[1]

In this article, nay, in the whole bull, John Eck was the pope's Holy Ghost, and he is as loth to lie as he is slow to speak. This Holy Ghost is just like him; they are two knaves of a kind. I have not spoken of prelates and princes, except that I wish there were no begging orders. This I still say, and many pious people with me. Amen.

[2] [Who will send the pope and his bullists to school and teach them to speak Latin before they write bulls? Are the beggars' sacks letters or paintings that they can be "blotted out," as the pope here lisps and stammers? Even if the pope continues to rule, I think he will never learn to speak his own language, so far is he going in forgetfulness of all knowledge and honor. I have not said that the two kinds of princes should "blot out" or destroy the beggars' sacks. But I have said I wished there were no begging orders, and this I know the pope, bishops, and priests wish from the bottom of their heart; yet they condemn my words, though they hold them even more than I do. But I see that John Eck has here been the pope's Holy Ghost, and he is as sorry to lie as he is slow to talk. The whole bull too is his, as he confesses, though his confession is not necessary. Father and child are so much alike that neither can deny the other. I must have liars and knaves for op-

---

[1] A reference to the mendicant orders (cf. Vol. II, pp. 115 f.). From the Larger Treatise on Usury of 1520 (Weimar Ed., VI, 42).

[2] This passage is found in Luther's manuscript, but not in the printed texts See Weimar Ed., VII, 457 n.

ponents; I am not worthy in the sight of God that a pious and honorable man should discuss these matters with me in a Christian way. That is my greatest complaint.

I still say that it is sin and shame to have beggary in the Church,[1] and much more abominable that priests, who have to do with preaching and the sacraments, should beg and begging orders be instituted by the pope as a Christian estate. Among the Jews in the Old Testament beggary was not allowed, and yet we Christians, who ought to be full of love for our neighbor, consider beggary a great honor. We ought to be ashamed in the sight of God and man that a Christian man goes publicly begging among us. We ought to anticipate men's wants and help the poor, so that there would be no need for begging. But this too is one of Antichrist's tricks. He institutes begging orders; otherwise he would have too few apostles, be too weak for the bishops and priests, and would not be able to raise his throne above heaven and earth.]

[1] Cf. Vol. II, pp. 134 f.

THE MAGNIFICAT
TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED

1520–1

(117)

INTRODUCTION

AMONG the friends of Luther who assured him of their sympathy and support, on the appearance of the bull Exsurge Domine, was John Frederick,[1] the seventeen-year-old son of the Elector John of Saxony, who sent him a copy of the letter in which he had interceded with his uncle Frederick the Wise on Luther's behalf. Luther replied on October 30, 1520, expressing his great pleasure at the young duke's interest in him as well as at his zeal for "the sacred truth of God," and assuring him that he had already resolved to do what his young friend urged, namely, not to be terrified by the papal bull, but to go on despite it with preaching, lecturing and writing.[2]

On December 20, John Frederick wrote again, addressing Luther as his "spiritual father," and communicating to him the gracious answer his uncle Frederick had made to his plea.[3] It was as a reply to this letter, which Luther had long left unanswered, that the Exposition of the Magnificat was intended to serve. It appears Luther had some time before this promised to prepare such an exposition for the young prince, who had been the pupil of Spalatin and had early manifested an uncommon fondness for the Word of God.

That Luther was at work as early as November redeeming his promise, we know from a reference in a letter of Spalatin's to Frederick the Wise, dated December 3[4]: "He has also begun to expound the Magnificat and to dedicate it to the young lord."[5] On February 27, 1521, Luther himself writes to Spalatin, "I am busy expounding Mary's canticle for the young prince, as an answer, though a tardy one, to his recent gracious letter to me."[6]

The answer was tardy enough, and little wonder; it was the most trying period in Luther's life. We may well believe him when he says that his work was interrupted again and again by "the troublesome quarrels of many adversaries." The most serious interruption of all was his citation to Worms, which set a temporary term to all his literary labors. On Easter Sunday, March 31, three days before his departure from Wittenberg, he sends his princely patron the three quires of the Magnificat thus far printed, including the letter of dedication, dated March 10. With them he

---

[1] See below, p. 123, n. 1.
[2] See DE WETTE, Luthers Briefe, i, p. 518 f.
[3] See ENDERS, Luthers Briefwechsel, iii, p. 23; SMITH, Luther's Correspondence, i, p. 443.
[4] BERBIG (in Studien und Kritiken, 1908, i) dates it December 1.
[5] See SMITH, i, 405.
[6] Ibid., i, 472 f.

sends a letter, replying to certain questions of the young prince concerning "the good works of Christ, and His sleeping," and closing with the words: "Herewith I send your Grace the beginning of the Magnificat. The fourth quire is still in press and I must defer it until my return. Your Grace will understand that, being summoned to the Diet, I must let everything lie. If God grant me a safe home-coming, your Grace shall have it without delay."[1]

The three quires constitute, according to the computation of the Weimar editors, about one-third of the entire work, and reach in our translation to p. 145, line 2; the fourth quire would on the same reckoning extend to p. 148, line 29.

Thus the Magnificat was composed and published in two instalments, between which lay the days at Worms and the "abduction" to the Wartburg. The completion of the treatise was one of the first fruits of the "wilderness" sojourn. On May 14, 1521, ten days after his arrival, we find Luther writing to Spalatin, "I shall continue my work on the Psalter and the Postils as soon as I receive from Wittenberg the things I need, among which I also expect the beginning of my Magnificat."[2] By June 10 the remainder of the exposition was completed and sent to Spalatin, who was to see it through the press "as soon as possible."[3] After a tedious delay that sorely taxed Luther's patience,[4] the completed work was brought out at the close of August or the beginning of September, 1521.

The Magnificat belongs to the class of devotional writings, of which we have already presented a specimen in Volume I, "The Fourteen of Consolation." Like that treatise, it is dedicated to a prince, and reached its noble patron in parts. Like it, too, it contains relics of older views.[5] Nevertheless, the Magnificat is a classical discussion of the place which the Virgin Mary occupies in the Protestant system. Although Luther regards her in one place[6] as sinless, and invokes her aid and intercession at the beginning and close of his work,[7] these are isolated instances; the whole tenor of the exposition is evangelical, and as far removed from the Mariolatry of Rome as from an ultra-protestant depreciation of the Mother of our Lord. "She does not want you to come to her, but through her to God."[8] There is something very human, and altogether unlike the radiant Queen of Heaven, in the Mary who "goes about her wonted household tasks, milking the cows, cooking the meals, washing pots and kettles, sweeping out the rooms."[9] It

[1] See De Wette, i, 582.
[2] See Enders, iii, 154.
[3] Ibid., iii, 171.
[4] Ibid., iii, 214, 215, 220.
[5] What Seckendorf calls, veteris persuasionis reliquiae.
[6] See below, p. 161.
[7] See pp. 125 and 198, and cf. p. 164.
[8] See p. 156.
[9] See p. 164.

is Luther's contribution to the German Madonna, and the Weimar editors well compare this and similar passages of the Magnificat with Albrecht Dürer's Marienleben, a series of quaint woodcuts portraying the life of the Virgin (1503–10).

The Magnificat is, besides, a true "mirror for princes," and reveals Luther's affectionate concern for the young duke, on whose shoulders such grave responsibilities were ere long to descend. There is here nothing of the sycophant[1] nor of the megalomaniac; he deals with him as a loving pastor with a poor sinner who is soon to become a mighty prince, in whose hands will lie the wellbeing or ruin of many, according as he is ruled by God or self. As the song of a lowly soul raised to dizzy and dangerous heights, yet preserving its humility and magnifying God alone, Mary's canticle is particularly commended to all princes and lords.

Lastly, the Magnificat is an important document for the study of Luther's German style. Side by side with awkward Latin-German constructions, reminiscent of the style of the "Treatise on Good Works," are found verbal felicities that show us the growing Sprachkünstler well on his way to the masterpiece of his German New Testament.[2] Naturally, this side of the treatise has little interest for the reader of a translation. We have, therefore, made no attempt to indicate, for instance, Luther's inconsistent rendering of the verses of the Magnificat in various places, and have altogether omitted to translate the prayer of Solomon (1 Kings 3:5–14) which he added at the close under the heading, "King Solomon's Royal Prayer, a Pattern for Princes and Lords." There are one or two places, however, where this linguistic feature could not be passed over without mutilating the treatise, as, for example, on pp. 158 and 166, where Luther wrestles with the difficulty of turning "all generations" into unambiguous German.[3]

The treatise is found in Clemen, ii, 133–187; Weimar, vii, 583–604; Erlangen, xlv, 211–290; Berlin, vi, 161–248; Walch, vii, 1220–1317; St. Louis, vii, 1372–1445. For a list of the early editions the student must go to the Weimar Edition, vii, 540 ff. The only other English translation known to us is one published by James Nicholson

---

[1] Against Grisar, Luther, ii, 798; iii, 406.

[2] Cf. the Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen (1530), Weimar Ed., xxx², 632 ff., especially the passage referring to the difficulties in the translation of the Magnificat (638 f.).

[3] At least a footnote should be devoted to the treatment of the Magnificat in the recent Roman Catholic life of Luther by Hartmann Grisar, S. J. (Freiburg, 1911–2, 3 vols.; an English translation in six volumes, by E. M. Lamond, is under way, four volumes having appeared thus far). Grisar calls the Magnificat a polemical not a devotional writing, and one that misrepresents the Catholic position (ii, 798; iii, 406). He refers in support of his contention to the following passages: pp. 134 f., 143, 151 f., 155 f., 170, 191, 195 f. (?), 200.

We ask the reader carefully to peruse these pages, and then to judge whether it is a fair criticism to say that "there pulsates through the Magnificat an unbridled spirit of attack and of hate" (iii, 73).

in Southwark, in 1538 (Clemen, ii, 138), which we have not been able to see. Lonicer[1] prepared a Latin translation (Martini Lutheri super Magnificat commentarii nuper e vernacula in latinum versi a Johanne Lonicero, Strassburg, 1525), which is of value in throwing light on several textual difficulties. The gradual growth of the treatise, as well as a short summary of its contents, may be traced in Köstlin-Kawerau, Martin Luther, 5. ed., i, 368, 374 f., 401 f., 445 f. The place that Mary holds in Luther's theology, as a whole, may be conveniently studied in Köstlin, Luthers Theologie, 2 ed. (1883), i, 169 f., 315; ii, 23 ff., 375, 386.

ALBERT T. W. STEINHAEUSER.

Allentown, Pa.

[1] Cf. Vol. I, 331, 337, n. 1, 390, n. 1.

THE MAGNIFICAT

1520–1

To His Serene Highness, Prince John Frederick,[1] Duke of Saxony, Landgrave of Thuringia, Margrave of Meissen, My Gracious Lord and Patron

Serene and high-born Prince, gracious Lord! May your Grace accept my humble prayer and service.

Your Grace's kind letter[2] has lately come into my hands and its cheering contents brought me much joy. By way of reply I send you this little exposition of the Magnificat, which I long since promised you, but which the troublesome quarrels of many adversaries have repeatedly interrupted. If I put it off any longer I shall have to blush for shame; nor is it meet that I make further excuses, lest your Grace's youthful spirit should be retarded, which inclines to love of Holy Writ, and which by further exercise in the same might be the more stirred up and strengthened. To which end I wish your Grace God's grace and help.

And of this there is sore need. For the welfare of many lies in the power of so mighty a prince, if he be taken out of

---

[1] John Frederick (the Magnanimous), born 1503, son of John the Constant, nephew of Frederick the Wise, pupil of Spalatin, succeeded his father as elector in 1532. One of the leaders of the Schmalkald League. Defeated and captured by Charles V in the battle of Mühlberg, 1547. Sentenced to death, but spared on surrendering his electoral vote and territory to his cousin Maurice. Set free in 1552. Most ardent admirer of Luther and uncompromising foe of the Interim. Especially interested in the publication of Luther's collected writings,—the Wittenberg and the Jena edition. Died, 1554. See G. Mentz, Johann Friedrich der Grossmütige, 3 vols. (Jena, 1903–8), and Kolde in Prot. Realencyk., ix, 244–9.

[2] Cf. Introduction, p. 119.

himself and graciously ruled by God, just as, on the other hand, the ruin of many lies in his power, if he be left to himself and ruled by God's disfavor. For while the hearts of all men are in God's almighty hand, it is not without reason said of kings and princes alone, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord: he turneth it whithersoever he will." Whereby God would instil His fear in the mighty lords and teach them that all their thoughts and intentions are naught without His special inspiration. Other men's acts bring gain or loss upon themselves alone or upon but few others; but rulers are appointed for the particular purpose of being either harmful or helpful to other men only,—and to the more men, the wider their domains. Wherefore the Scripture also calls pious and God-fearing princes angels of God and even gods; but harmful princes it calls lions, dragons and wild beasts, which God includes amongst His four plagues—pestilence, famine, war, and noisome beasts.[1]

Prov. 21:1

1 Sam. 29:9
Ps. 82:6
Zeph. 3:3
Jer. 51:34
Ezek. 14:21

The heart of man, then, being by nature but flesh and blood, is of itself prone to presumption; and when, besides this, power, riches and honor fall to his lot, these form so strong an incentive to presumption and overconfident security as to move him to forget God and despise his subjects. Being able to do wrong with impunity, he lets himself go and becomes a beast, does whatever he pleases, and is a ruler in name, but a monster in deed. Wherefore the sage Bias[2] has well said, Magistratus virum ostendit,—the office of ruler reveals what manner of man the ruler is. As for the subjects, they dare not let themselves go for fear of the authorities. Therefore all rulers, since they need not fear men, should fear God more than others do, should learn to know Him and His works, and walk diligently, as St. Paul says in Romans xii, "He that ruleth, let him do it with diligence."

Rom. 12:8

---

[1] Cf. Vol. I, p. 264.

[2] One of the seven sages of Greece (about 570 B. C.). In Erasmus' Adagia the saying is attributed to Pittacus of Mitylene or to Solon.

Now I do not know in all the Scriptures anything that so well serves such a purpose as this sacred hymn of the most blessed Mother of God, which ought indeed to be learned and kept in mind by all who would rule well and be helpful lords. Truly she sings in it most sweetly of the fear of God, what manner of lord He is, and especially what His dealings are with those of high and of low degree. Let another listen to his love singing a worldly ditty; this pure Virgin well deserves to be heard by a prince and lord, as she sings him her sacred, chaste and salutary song. It is a fine custom, too, that this canticle is sung in all the churches daily at vespers, and to a particular and appropriate setting that distinguishes it from the other chants.[1]

May the tender Mother of God herself procure[2] for me the spirit of wisdom, profitably and thoroughly to expound this song of hers, so that your Grace as well as we all may draw therefrom wholesome knowledge and a praiseworthy life, and thus come to chant and sing this Magnificat eternally in heaven. To this may God help us. Amen.

Herewith I commend myself to your Grace, humbly praying your Grace in all kindness to receive my poor effort.

Your Grace's obedient chaplain,

DR. MARTIN LUTHER.

Wittenberg, 10 March, 1521.

---

[1] "The canticles of Mary and of Zacharias share the peculiar honor of commencing every verse with an initium or intonation. This intonation varies for the varying modes [or tones], and the Magnificat has a special solemn intonation for the second, seventh and eighth modes. The ceremonies attending its singing in the choir at solemn vespers are notably impressive. At the intonation 'Magnificat,' all who are in the sanctuary arise, and the celebrant (having first removed his biretta 'in honour of the canticles') goes with his assistants to the altar, where, with the customary reverences, etc., he blesses the incense and incenses the altar, as at the beginning of solemn mass. In order to permit the elaborate ceremony of incensing, the Magnificat is sung much more slowly than the psalms."—Catholic Encyclopedia, ix, 535; cf. Prot. Realencyk., xii, 74 f. See below, p. 138.

[2] See Introduction, p. 120, and cf. below, p. 198.

THE MAGNIFICAT[1]

Luke 1:46–55

I. My soul doth magnify the Lord:

II. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

III. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden:
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

IV. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things:
And holy is His Name.

V. And His mercy is on them that fear Him:
From generation to generation.

VI. He hath showed strength with His arm:
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

VII. He hath put down the mighty from their seats:
And exalted them of low degree.

VIII. He hath filled the hungry with good things:
And the rich He hath sent empty away.

IX. He hath holpen His servant Israel:
In remembrance of His mercy.

X. As He spake to our fathers:
To Abraham and to his seed for ever.

---

[1] Luther's rendering of the Magnificat at this place differs in a number of instances from that interspersed through the body of the work. These variations have been disregarded in the present translation, as having value only for the student of Luther's German. Cf. Introduction, p. 121.

INTRODUCTION

In order properly to understand this sacred hymn of praise, we need to bear in mind that the most blessed Virgin Mary is speaking out of her own experience, in which she was enlightened and instructed by the Holy Spirit. For no one can rightly understand God or His Word who has not received such understanding directly from the Holy Spirit. But no one can receive it from the Holy Spirit without experiencing, proving and feeling it. In such experience the Holy Spirit instructs us as in His own school, outside of which naught is learned save empty words and idle fables. When the Holy Virgin, then, experienced what great things God wrought in her, notwithstanding she was so poor, meek, despised, and of low degree, the Holy Spirit taught her this precious knowledge and wisdom, that God is a Lord whose work consists but in this—to exalt them of low degree, to put down the mighty from their seats, in short, to break whatever is whole and make whole whatever is broken.

For even as God in the beginning of creation made the world out of nothing, whence He is called the Creator and the Almighty, so His manner of working continues still the same. Even now and unto the end of the world, all His works are such that out of that which is nothing, worthless, despised, wretched and dead, He makes that which is something, precious, honorable, blessed and living. Again, whatever is something, precious, honorable, blessed and living, He makes to be nothing, worthless, despised, wretched and dying. After this manner no creature can work; none can produce anything out of nothing.

Therefore His eyes look only into the depths, not unto the heights; as it is said in Daniel iii, "Thou sittest upon the cherubim, and beholdest the depths"; in Psalm cxxxviii, "The Lord is the most high, and looketh down on the low: and the high he knoweth afar off"; and in Psalm cxiii, "Who

Dan. 3:55 (Vulgate)
Ps. 138:6
Ps. 113:5f.

is as the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, and looketh down on the low things in heaven and earth?" For since He is the Most High, and there is naught above Him, He cannot look above Him; nor yet to either side, for there is none like unto Him. He must needs, therefore, look within Him and beneath Him; and the farther one is beneath Him, the better doth He see him.

The eyes of the world and of men, on the contrary, look only above them and are lifted up with pride, as it is said
Prov. 30:13 in the book of Proverbs, "There is a generation, whose eyes are lofty, and their eyelids lifted up on high." This we experience every day. Every one strives after that which is above him, after honor, power, wealth, knowledge, a life of ease, and whatever is lofty and great. And where such folk are, there are many hangers-on, all the world gathers round them, gladly yields them service, and would be by their side and share in their high estate. Wherefore the Scriptures not vainly describe but few kings and rulers who were godly men. On the other hand, no one is willing to look into the depths with their poverty, disgrace, squalor, misery and anguish. From these all turn away their eyes. Where there are such folk, every one takes to his heels, forsakes and shuns and leaves them to themselves; no one dreams of helping them nor of making something out of them. And so they must needs remain in the depths and in their low and despised estate. There is among men no creator who would make something out of nothing, although
Rom. 12:16 that is what St. Paul teaches in Romans xii, when he says, "Dear brethren, set not your mind on high things, but go along with the lowly."

Therefore, to God alone belongs that sort of seeing that looks into the depths with their need and misery, and is
1 Pet. 5:5 nigh unto all that are in the depths; as St. Peter says, "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace." And this is the source of men's love and praise of God. For no one can praise God without first loving Him. No one can love Him unless He makes Himself known to

him in the most lovable and intimate fashion.[1] And He can make Himself known only through those works of His which He reveals in us, and which we feel and experience within ourselves. But where there is this experience, namely, that He is a God who looks into the depths and helps only the poor, despised, afflicted, miserable, forsaken, and those who are naught, there a hearty love for Him is born, the heart o'erflows with gladness, and goes leaping and dancing for the great pleasure it has found in God. There the Holy Spirit is present and has taught us in a trice such exceeding great knowledge and gladness through this experience.

For this reason God hath also imposed death upon us all, and laid the cross of Christ together with countless sufferings and afflictions on His beloved children and Christians; nay, He even suffers us sometimes to fall into sin; in order that He may look much into the depths, bring help to many, perform manifold works, show Himself a true Creator, and thereby make Himself known, and worthy of love and praise. Herein, alas! the world with its proud eyes constantly thwarts Him, hinders His seeing, working and helping, and our knowledge, love and praise of Him, and deprives Him of all His glory, itself of its pleasure, joy and salvation.

He also cast His only and well-beloved Son Christ into the depths of all woe, and showed in Him most plainly to what end His seeing, work, help, method, counsel and will are directed. Wherefore Christ, having most fully experienced all these things, abounds through all eternity in the knowledge, love and praise of God; as it is said in Psalm xxi, "Thou hast made him exceedingly glad with thy countenance"—namely, in that He sees Thee and knows Thee. Here, too, belongs Psalm xlv, where it is said that all the

Ps. 21:6

Ps. 45:17

[1] The words of Augustine (Confessions, I, i) seem to be in Luther's mind: "Grant me, Lord, to know and understand what I ought first to do, whether call upon Thee, or praise Thee? and which ought to be first, to know Thee, or to call upon Thee?" It would be an interesting study to trace the parallels between Luther and Augustine, with particular reference to the former's devotional writings.

saints shall do naught else in heaven but praise God because He looked upon them when they were in the depths, and there made Himself known to them and loved and praised by them.

The tender Mother of Christ does the same here, and teaches us, with her words and by the example of her experience, how to know, love and praise God. For since she boasts, with heart leaping for joy and praising God, that He regarded her despite her low estate and nothingness, we must needs believe that she came of poor, despised and lowly parents. Let us make it very plain for the sake of the simple. Doubtless there were in Jerusalem daughters of the chief priests and counselors, who were rich, comely, youthful, cultured, and held in high renown by all the people; even as it is to-day with the daughters of kings, princes and men of wealth. The same was also true of many another city. Even in her own town of Nazareth, she was not the daughter of one of the chief rulers, but a poor and plain citizen's daughter, whom none looked up to nor esteemed. To her neighbors and their daughters she was but a simple maiden, tending the cattle and doing the house-work, and doubtless esteemed no more than any poor maidservant to-day, who does as she is bidden about the house.

For thus Isaiah announced, in his eleventh chapter:
Isa. 11:1f. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root, and the Holy Spirit shall rest upon him." The stem and root is the generation of Jesse or David, in particular the Virgin Mary; the rod and flower is Christ. Now, just as unlikely, nay incredible, a thing it is that a fair branch and flower should spring from a dry and withered stem and root, just so unlikely was it that Mary the Virgin should become the mother of such a child. For, I take it, she is called a stem and root, not only because she became a mother in a supernatural manner and without violation of her virginity,—even as it is above nature to make a branch grow out of a dead tree-stump,—but also for the following reason: Of yore, in the

days of David and Solomon, the royal stem and line of David had been green and flourishing, fortunate in its great glory, might and riches, and famous in the eyes of the world. But in the latter days, when Christ was to come, the priests had usurped this honor and were the sole rulers, while the royal line of David had become so impoverished and despised it was like unto a dead stem, so that there was no hope nor likelihood that a king descended therefrom would ever attain to any great glory. But when all seemed most unlikely—comes Christ, and is born of the despised stem, of the poor and lowly maiden! The rod and flower springs from her whom Sir Annas' or Caiaphas' daughter would not have deigned to have for her humblest lady's maid. Thus God's work and His eyes are in the depths, but man's only in the height.

So much for the occasion of Mary's canticle, which let us now consider in detail.

"My Soul doth Magnify the Lord"

These words express the strong ardor and exuberant joy whereby all her mind and life are inwardly exalted in the Spirit. Wherefore she does not say, "I exalt the Lord," but, "My soul doth exalt Him." It is as though she said, "My life and all my senses float in the love and praise of God and in lofty pleasures, so that I am no longer mistress of myself; I am exalted, more than I exalt myself, to praise the Lord." That is the experience of all those through whom the divine sweetness and Spirit are poured;[1] they cannot find words to utter what they feel. For to praise the Lord with gladness is not a work of man; it is rather a joyful suffering, and the work of God alone. It cannot be taught in words, but must be learned in one's own experience. Even as David says, in Psalm xxxiv, "O taste and see that the Lord is sweet: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." He puts tasting before seeing, because this

Ps. 34:8

[1] Durchgossen.

sweetness cannot be known unless one has experienced and felt it for oneself; and no one can attain to such experience unless he trusts in God with his whole heart, when he is in the depths and in sore straits. Therefore David makes haste to add, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in God." Such a one will experience the work of God within himself, and will thus come to feel His sweetness, and thereby attain to all knowledge and understanding.

Let us take up the words in their order. The first is "my soul." The Scriptures assign three parts to man, as
1 Thess. 5:23 St. Paul says in I Thessalonians v, "The God of peace sanctify you wholly, that your whole spirit, and soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (There is yet another division of each of these three, and the whole of man, into two parts, which are called spirit and flesh. This is a division not of the nature of man, but of his qualities. The nature of man consists of the three parts—spirit, soul and body; and all of these may be good or evil, that is, they may be spirit or flesh. But we are not now dealing with this division.)

The first part, the spirit, is the highest, deepest and noblest part of man. By it he is enabled to lay hold on things incomprehensible, invisible, and eternal. It is, in brief, the dwelling-place of faith and the Word of God. Of it
Ps. 51:10 David speaks in Psalm li, "Lord, create in my inward parts a right spirit"—that is, a straight and upright faith. But
Ps. 78:37 of the unbelieving he says, in Psalm lxxviii, "Their heart was not right with God, nor was their spirit faithful to him."

The second part, or the soul, is this same spirit, so far as its nature is concerned, but viewed as performing a different function, namely, giving life to the body and working through the body. In the Scriptures it is frequently put for the life; for the soul may live without the body, but the body has no life apart from the soul. Even in sleep the soul lives and works without ceasing. It is its nature to comprehend not incomprehensible things, but such things

as the reason can know and understand. Indeed, reason is the light in this dwelling, and unless the spirit, which is lighted with the brighter light of faith, controls this light of reason, it cannot but be in error. For it is too feeble to deal with things divine.[1] To these two parts of man the Scriptures ascribe many things, such as wisdom and knowledge—wisdom to the spirit, knowledge to the soul; likewise hatred and love, delight and horror, and the like.

The third part is the body with its members. Its work is but to carry out and apply that which the soul knows and the spirit believes.

Let us take an illustration of this from Holy Scripture. In the tabernacle fashioned by Moses there were three separate compartments. The first was called the holy of holies: here was God's dwelling-place, and in it there was no light. The second was called the holy place: here stood a candlestick with seven arms and seven lamps. The third was called the outer court: this lay under the open sky and in the full light of the sun. In this tabernacle we have a figure of the Christian man. His spirit is the holy of holies, where God dwells in the darkness of faith, where no light is; for he believes that which he neither sees nor feels nor comprehends. His soul is the holy place, with its seven lamps, that is, all manner of reason, discrimination, knowledge and understanding of visible and bodily things. His body is the forecourt, open to all, so that men may see his works and manner of life. Ex. 26:30 ff.; 40:1 ff.

Now Paul prays God, who is a God of peace, to sanctify us not in one part only, but wholly, through and through, so that spirit, soul, body, and all, may be holy. We might mention many reasons why he prays in this manner, but let the following suffice. When the spirit is no longer holy, then naught is holy. This holiness of the spirit is the scene of the sorest conflict and the source of the greatest danger. It consists in naught else than in faith pure and simple. for the spirit has nothing to do with things comprehensible,

[1] Cf. Vol. I, p. 346.

as we have seen. But now there come false teachers and lure the spirit out of doors; one puts forth this work, another that mode of attaining to godliness. And unless the spirit is preserved and is wise, it will come forth and follow these men. It will fall upon the external works and rules, and imagine it can attain to godliness by means of them. And before we know it, faith is lost, and the spirit is dead in the sight of God.

Then commence the manifold sects and orders. This one becomes a Carthusian, that one a Franciscan; this one seeks salvation by fasting, that one by praying; one by one work, another by another. Yet these are all self-chosen works and orders, never commanded by God, but invented by men. Engrossed in them, they have no eye for faith, but only go on teaching men to put their trust in works, until they are so sunk in works that they fall out among themselves. Every one would be the greatest and despises the others, as our bragging and blustering Observantines[1] do to-day. Over against such work-saints and teachers of pious appearance, Paul prays, calling God a God of peace and unity. Such a God these divided, unpeaceable saints cannot have nor keep, unless they give up "their own things," agree together in the same spirit and faith, and learn that works breed nothing but distinctions, sin and discord, while faith alone makes men pious, united and peaceable. As it is said in Psalm lxviii, "God maketh us to dwell in unity in the house"; and in Psalm cxxxiii, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Ps. 68:6 (Vulgate) Ps. 133:1

There is no peace except where men teach that we are made pious, righteous and blessed by no work nor outward thing, but solely by faith, that is, a firm confidence in the unseen grace of God that is promised us, as I showed at greater length in the Good Works.[2] But where there is no faith, there must needs be many works, and

[1] Cf. Vol. I, p. 345.
[2] See Vol. I, pp. 187 ff.

where these are, peace and unity depart, and God cannot remain. Therefore Paul is not content with saying here simply, "your spirit, your soul," etc., but he says, "your whole spirit," for on this all depends. He employs a fine Greek expression, τὸ ὁλόκληρον πνεῦμα ὑμῶν—"your spirit that possesses the whole inheritance." It is as though he said: "Let no doctrine of works lead you astray. The believing spirit alone possesses all things. Everything depends upon the faith of the spirit. And this same 'spirit that possesses the whole inheritance' I pray God to preserve in you against the false doctrines which would make works the basis of our trust in God, and which are but false tidings,[1] because they do not base such trust upon God's grace alone." When this spirit that possesses the whole inheritance is preserved, both soul and body are able to remain without error and evil works. On the other hand, when the spirit is without faith, the soul together with the whole life cannot but fall into wickedness and error, however good an intention and opinion it may profess, and find its own devotion and satisfaction therein. As a consequence of this error and false opinion of the soul, all the works of the body become likewise evil and damnable, even though a man killed himself with fasting and performed the works of all the saints. In order, therefore, that our works and our life may not be in vain, but that we may become truly holy, it is necessary that God preserve, first, our spirit, and then our soul and body, not only from open sins, but much more from false and seeming good works.[2]

Let this suffice in explanation of these two words, soul and spirit; they occur very frequently in the Scriptures. We come to the word magnificat, which means to magnify, to exalt, to esteem one highly, as having the

[1] Falsche Gewissen. We take Gewissen in the sense of information, intelligence, news; Dietz, Wörterbuch zu Luthers deutschen Schriften, does not notice this passage. The believing spirit, which is the heir, is not to be misled by false rumors of an inheritance based on works and not on faith.

[2] Cf. Vol. I, p. 326.

power, the knowledge and the desire to perform many great and good things, such as those that follow in this canticle. Even as a book-title indicates what is the contents of the book, so this word m a g n i f i c a t is used by Mary to indicate what her hymn of praise is to be about, namely, the great works and deeds of God, for the strengthening of our faith, for the comforting of all them of low degree, and for the terrifying of all the mighty ones of earth. We are to let the hymn serve this threefold purpose; for she sang it not for herself alone, but for us all, that we should sing it after her.

Now these great works of God will neither terrify nor comfort any one unless he believes that God has not only the power and the knowledge, but also the willingness and hearty desire to do such great things. Nay, it is not even enough to believe that He is willing to do them for others, but not for you. That would be to put yourself beyond the pale of these works of God, as is done by those who, because of their strength, do not fear Him, and by those of little faith who, because of their tribulations, fall into despair. That sort of faith is naught; it is dead; it is like an idea got from a tale. You must rather, without any wavering or doubt, realize His will toward you, and firmly believe that He both will and is willing to do great things also to you. Such a faith has life and being; it pervades and changes the whole man; it constrains you to fear if you are mighty, and to take comfort if you are of low degree. And the mightier you are, the more must you fear; the lowlier you are, the more must you take comfort. This neither of the other two kinds of faith[1] is able to effect. How will it be with you in the hour of death? There you must needs believe that He has not only the power and the knowledge, but also the desire to help you. For it is indeed an unspeakably great work that must be wrought in order to deliver you from eternal death, to save you and make you God's heir. To this faith all things are possible, as Christ

[1] Those mentioned in the first two sentences of this paragraph.

saith; it alone abides; it also comes to experience the works of God, and thus attains to the love of God, and thence to songs and praise of God, so that man esteems him highly and truly magnifies Him. Mark 9:23 Matt. 17:20

For God is not magnified by us so far as His nature is concerned—He is unchangeable—but He is magnified in our knowledge and experience, when we greatly esteem Him and highly regard Him, especially as to his grace and goodness. Therefore the holy Mother does not say, "My voice or my mouth, my hand or my thoughts, my reason or my will, doth magnify the Lord." For there be many who praise God with a loud voice, preach about Him with high sounding words, speak much of Him, dispute and write about Him and paint His image; whose thoughts dwell often upon Him, and who reach out after Him and speculate about Him with their reason; there are also many who exalt Him with false devotion and a false will. But Mary says, "My s o u l doth magnify Him"—that is, my whole life and being, mind and strength, esteem Him highly. She is caught up, as it were, unto Him, and feels herself lifted up into His good and gracious will, as the following verse shows. It is the same when any one shows us a signal favor; our whole life seems to incline to him, and we say, "Ah, I esteem him highly," that is to say, "My soul doth magnify him." How much more will such a lively inclination be awakened in us when we experience the favor of God, which is exceeding great in His works. All words and thoughts fail us, and our whole life and soul must needs be set in motion, as though all that lived within us would fain break forth into praise and singing.

But here we find two kinds of false spirits that cannot sing the Magnificat aright. First, there are those who will not praise Him unless He does well to them; as David says, "He will praise thee when thou shalt do well to him." These seem indeed to be greatly praising God; but because they are unwilling to suffer oppression and to be in the depths, they can never experience the proper works of God, and Ps. 49:18 (Vulgate)

therefore can never truly love nor praise Him. The whole world is nowadays filled with praise and service to God, with singing and preaching, with organs and trumpets, and the Magnificat is magnificently sung;[1] but alackaday! that this precious canticle should be rendered by us so utterly without salt or savor. For we sing only when it fares well with us; as soon as it fares ill, we have done with singing and no longer esteem God highly, but suppose He can or will do nothing for us. Then the Magnificat also must languish.

The other sort are more dangerous still. They err on the opposite side. They magnify themselves by reason of the good gifts of God, and do not ascribe them to His goodness alone. They themselves desire to bear a part in them; they would be honored and set above other men on account of them. When they behold the good things that God has wrought for them, they fall upon them and appropriate them as their own; they regard themselves as better than others who have no such things. Verily, this is a smooth and slippery position. The good gifts of God will naturally produce proud and self-complacent hearts. Therefore we must here give heed to Mary's last word, which is "the Lord." She does not say, "My soul doth magnify itself," or "exalt me." She does not desire herself to be esteemed; she magnifies God alone and gives all glory to Him. She leaves herself out, and ascribes everything to God alone, from Whom she received it. For though she experienced such an exceeding great work of God within herself, yet was she ever minded not to exalt herself above the humblest mortal living. Had she done so, she would have sunk, like Lucifer, into the lowest hell.

She had no thought but this: if any other maiden had got such good things from God, she would be just as glad and would not grudge them to her; yea, she counted herself alone unworthy of such honor and all others worthy of it. She would have been well content had God withdrawn these blessings from her and bestowed them upon another before

[1] Cf. p. 125, n. 1.

her very eyes. So little did she lay claim to anything, but left all God's gifts freely in His hands, being herself no more than a cheerful guest-chamber and willing hostess to so great a Guest. Therefore she also kept all these things for ever. That is to magnify God alone, to count only Him great and lay claim to nothing. We see here how strong an incentive she had to fall into sin, so that it is no less a miracle that she refrained from pride and arrogance than that she received the gifts she did. Tell me, was not hers a wondrous soul? She finds herself the Mother of God, exalted above all mortals, and remains withal so simple and so calm and counts not any poor serving maid beneath her. O we poor mortals! if we come into a little wealth or might or honor, yea if we are a whit fairer than other men, we cannot abide being made equal to any one beneath us, but are puffed up beyond all measure. What should we do if we possessed such great and lofty blessings?

Therefore God lets us remain poor and hapless, because we cannot leave His tender gifts undefiled, nor keep an even mind, but let our spirits rise or fall according as He gives or takes away His gifts. But Mary's heart remains at all times the same; she lets God have His will with her, and draws from it all only a good comfort, joy and trust in God. Thus we too should do; that would be to sing a right Magnificat.

"And my Spirit hath Rejoiced in God my Saviour"

We have seen what is meant by "spirit"; it is that which lays hold by faith on things incomprehensible. Mary, therefore, calls God her Saviour, or her Salvation, even though she neither saw nor felt that this was so, but trusted in sure confidence that He was her Saviour and her Salvation. Which faith came to her through the work God had wrought within her. And, truly, she sets things in their proper order when she calls God her Lord before calling

Him her Saviour, and when she calls Him her Saviour before recounting His works. Whereby she teaches us to love and praise God for Himself alone, and in the right order, and not selfishly to seek anything at His hands. This is done when one praises God because He is good, regards only His bare goodness, and finds one's joy and pleasure in that alone. That is a lofty, pure and tender mode of loving and praising God, and well becomes this Virgin's high and tender spirit.

But the impure and perverted lovers, who are nothing else than parasites and who seek their own advantage in God, neither love nor praise His bare goodness, but have an eye to themselves and consider only how good God is to them, that is, how deeply He makes them feel His goodness and how many good things He does to them. They esteem Him highly, are filled with joy and sing His praises, so long as this feeling continues. But as soon as ever He hides His face and withdraws the rays of His goodness, leaving them bare and in misery, their love and praise are at an end. They are unable to love and praise the bare, unfelt goodness that is hidden in God. Whereby they prove that their spirit did not rejoice in God their Saviour, and that they had no true love and praise for His bare goodness. They delighted in their salvation much more than in their Saviour, in the gift more than in the Giver, in the creature rather than in the Creator. For they are not able to preserve an even mind in plenty and in want, in wealth and in poverty; as St. Paul says, "I know how to abound and how to suffer want." Here apply the words in Psalm xlix, "They will praise thee when thou shalt do well with them." That is to say, they love not Thee, but themselves; if they have but Thy good and pleasant things, they care nought for Thee. As Christ also said to them that sought Him, "Verily I say unto you, you seek me not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled."

Phil. 4:12
Ps. 49:18 (Vulgate)
John 6:26

Such impure and false spirits defile all God's gifts, and prevent His giving them many gifts, especially the gift of

salvation Whereof the following is a good illustration: Once on a time a certain godly woman saw in a vision three virgins seated near an altar. During the mass a beautiful boy leapt from the altar, and approaching the first virgin in a most friendly manner, lavished caresses upon her and smiled lovingly in her face. Thereupon he approached the second virgin, but was not so friendly with her, neither did he caress her, howbeit he lifted her veil and vouchsafed her a pleasant smile. But for the third virgin he had not a friendly sign, struck her in the face and tore her hair, thrust her from him and dealt most ungallantly with her. Then he ran swiftly back upon the altar and disappeared. Afterwards the vision was interpreted for the woman on this wise: The first of the three virgins was a figure of the impure and selfseeking spirits, on whom God must needs lavish many good things, and whose will He must do rather than they His; they are unwilling to suffer want, but must always find joy and comfort in God and are not content with His goodness. The second virgin was a figure of the spirits that make a beginning of serving God, and are willing to do without some things, but not without all, nor to be free from all selfseeking and enjoyment. God must now and then smile upon them and let them feel His good things, in order that they may learn thereby to love and praise His bare goodness. But the third virgin, that poor Cinderella—for her there is naught but want and misery; she seeks to enjoy nothing, and is content to know that God is good, even though she should never once experience it, though that is impossible. She keeps an even mind in both estates; she loves and praises God's goodness just as much when she does not feel it as when she does. She neither falls upon the good things when they are given, nor falls away when they are removed. That is the true bride of Christ, who says to Him: "I seek not Thine, but Thee; Thou art to me no dearer when it goes well with me, nor any less dear when it goes ill."

Such spirits fulfil the words of Scripture, "Go not aside Isa. 30:21
from the even and right way of God, neither to the left

hand nor to the right." That is to say, they are to love and praise God evenly and rightly, and not seek their own advantage or enjoyment. Such a spirit was David's, who, when he was driven from Jerusalem by his son Absalom and was like to be cast out for ever and to lose his kingdom and the favor of God, said: "Go to; if I shall find favor in the sight of the Lord, he will bring me back again. But if he shall say to me, Thou pleasest me not; I am ready." O how pure a spirit was that, not to leave off loving, praising and following the goodness of God even in the direst distress! Such a spirit is manifested here by Mary the Mother of God. Standing in the midst of such exceeding great good things, she does not fall upon them nor seek her own enjoyment therein, but keeps her spirit pure in loving and praising the bare goodness of God, ready and willing to have God withdraw them from her and leave her spirit poor and naked and in want.

2 Sam. 15:25f.

Now it is much more difficult to practice moderation in the midst of riches, honor and power than amid poverty, dishonor and weakness, since the former are mighty incentives to evildoing. Even so the wondrous pure spirit of Mary is worthy of the greater praise, because, having such overwhelming honors heaped upon her head, she does not suffer that to make her stumble, but acts as though she did not see it, remains "even and right in the way," clings only to God's goodness which she neither sees nor feels, overlooks the good things she does feel, and neither takes pleasure nor seeks her own enjoyment therein. Thus she can truly sing, "My spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." It is indeed a spirit that exults only in faith, and rejoices not in the good things of God that she felt, but only in God, Whom she did not feel, and Who is her Salvation, known by her in faith alone. Such are the truly lowly, naked, hungry and God-fearing spirits, as we shall see below.[1]

From all this we may know and judge how full the world is nowadays of false preachers and false saints, who fill

[1] See p. 172.

the ears of the people with preaching good works. There are indeed a few who teach them how to do good works, but the greater part preach human doctrines and works that they themselves have devised and set up. Even the best of them, alas! are yet so far from this "even and straight road" that they constantly drive the people to "the right hand" by teaching good works and a godly life, not for the sake of the bare goodness of God, but for the sake of one's own enjoyment. For if there were no heaven nor hell, and if they could not enjoy the good gifts of God, they would let His good things go unloved and unpraised. These men are mere parasites and hirelings; slaves, not sons; aliens, not heirs. They turn themselves into idols, whom God is to love and praise, and for whom He is to do the very things they ought to do for Him. They have no spirit, nor is God their Salvation. His good gifts are their Saviour, and with them God must needs serve them as their menial. They are the children of Israel, who were not content in the desert with eating bread from heaven, but fell alusting after meat, onions and garlic. Num. 11:4ff.

Alas! all the world, all monasteries, and all churches are now filled with such folk. They all walk in that false, perverted and uneven spirit, and urge and drive others to do the same. They exalt good works to such a height that they imagine they can merit heaven thereby. But the bare goodness of God is what ought rather to be preached and known above all else, and we ought to learn that, even as God saves us out of pure goodness, without any merit of works, so we in our turn should do the works without reward or selfseeking, for the sake of the bare goodness of God. We should desire nothing in them but His good pleasure, and not be anxious about a reward. That will come of itself, without our seeking. For though it is impossible that the reward should not follow, if we do well in a pure and right spirit, without thought of reward or enjoyment; nevertheless God will not have such a selfseeking and impure spirit, nor will it ever obtain a reward. A son serves his

father willingly and without reward, as his heir, solely for the father's sake. But a son who served his father merely for the sake of the inheritance would indeed be an unnatural child and deserve to be cast off by his father.

"For He hath Regarded the Low Estate of His Handmaiden: For behold, from henceforth all Generations shall Call me Blessed"

The word humilitas has been translated "humility" by some, as though the Virgin Mary referred to her humility and boasted of it; hence certain prelates also call themselves humiles.[1] But that is very wide of the mark, for no one can boast of any good thing in the sight of God without sin and perdition. In His sight we ought to boast only of His pure grace and goodness, which He bestows upon us unworthy ones; so that not our love and praise, but His alone, may dwell in us and may preserve us.

Prov. 25:6 Thus Solomon teaches us to do, in Proverbs xxv: "Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not (that is, pretend not to be something) in the place of great men. For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince." How should such pride and vainglory be imputed to this pure and righteous Virgin, as though she boasted of her humility in the presence of God? For humility is the highest of all the virtues,[2] and no one could boast of possessing it save the very proudest of mortals.

[1] He seems to mean the Humiliati, a penitential order, dating back to the beginning of the XII Century, to the reign of Emperor Henry V. They received papal approbation from Innocent III about 1200, and were suppressed by a Bull of February 8, 1571. Cf. Cath. Encyclop., vii, 543, and Prot. Realencyk., viii, 447 ff.

[2] In the Catholic system humility is not the greatest of the virtues. It does not even rank as one of the four cardinal virtues, though it is annexed to the last of them—temperance—as a "potential part." Humility is, however, said to be the foundation of the spiritual edifice; it is the first virtue, inasmuch as it removes the obstacles to faith and makes a man a fit recipient of grace. Cf. Catholic Encyclop., vii, 544.

It is God alone who knows humility; He alone judges it and brings it to light; so that no one knows less about humility than he who is truly humble.

The scriptural meaning of humiliare is to humble and bring to naught. Hence Christians are frequently called in the Scriptures, pauperes, afflicti, humiliati—poor, afflicted, despised. Thus, in Psalm cxvi, "I was greatly afflicted"—that is, humbled. Humility is, therefore, nothing else than a disregarded, despised and lowly estate, such as that of men who are poor, sick, anhungered, thirsty, in prison, suffering, and dying. Such was Job in his afflictions, David when he was thrust out of his kingdom, and Christ as well as all Christians, in their distresses. Those are the depths of which we said above[1] that God's eyes look only into them, but men's only unto the heights, namely, to that which is splendid and glorious and makes a brave show. Wherefore Jerusalem is called in the Scriptures a city upon which God's eyes are open—that is to say, the Christian Church lies in the depths and is despised by the world; therefore God regards her and His eyes are always fixed upon her, as He says in Psalm xxxii, "I will fix my eyes upon thee."

Ps. 116:10

Zech. 12:4

Ps. 32:8

St. Paul also says, in I Corinthians i, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are." Whereby He turns the world with all its wisdom and power into foolishness, and gives us another wisdom and power. Since, then, it is His manner to regard things that are in the depths and disregarded, I have rendered the word humilitas by nothingness or low estate. This, therefore, is what Mary means: "God hath regarded me, a poor, despised and lowly maiden, though He might have found a rich, renowned, noble and mighty queen, the daughter of princes and great lords. He might

1 Cor. 1:27f.

[1] See page 127.

have found the daughter of Annas or of Caiaphas, who were the first folk in the land. But He let His pure and gracious eyes light on me, and used so poor and despised a maiden, in order that no one might glory in His presence, as though he were worthy of this, and that I must needs acknowledge all to be pure grace and goodness and no whit my merit or worthiness."

1 Cor. 1:29

Now, we described above[1] at length, how lowly was the estate of this tender Virgin, and how unexpectedly this honor came to her, that God should regard her in such abundant grace. Hence she does not glory in her worthiness nor yet in her unworthiness, but solely in the divine regard, which is so exceeding good and gracious that He deigned to look upon such a lowly maiden, and to look upon her in so glorious and honorable a fashion. They, therefore, do her an injustice who hold that she gloried, not indeed in her virginity, but in her humility. She gloried neither in the one nor in the other, but only in the gracious regard of God. Hence the stress lies not on the word humilitatem, but on the word respexit.[2] For not her humility, but God's regard, is to be praised. When a prince takes a poor beggar by the hand, it is not the beggar's lowliness, but the prince's grace and goodness, that is to be commended.

In order to dispel that false opinion, and to distinguish true from false humility, we shall have to digress a little and treat of the subject of humility, in respect to which many are far astray. Humility we call that which St. Paul calls in the Greek, ταπεινοφροσύνη, and in the Latin, affectus vilitatis seu sensus humilium rerum—that is, a love and leaning to lowly and despised things. Now we find many here who carry water to the well; that is to say, who affect humble clothing, faces, gestures, places and words, but with the intention of being regarded by the mighty and rich, by scholars and

[1] See page 130.

[2] Not on "low estate," but on "He hath regarded."

saints, yea, by God Himself, as men who take pleasure in lowly things. For, if they knew that no one regarded what they did, they would soon give over. That is an artificial humility. For their evil eye is fixed only on the reward and result of their humility and not on lowly things apart from a reward; hence, when the reward and result no longer allures, their humility stops. Such folk one cannot call affecti vilitatis—having their heart and will set on things of low degree; for they have only their thoughts, lips, hands, garb and demeanor therein, while their heart looks above to great and lofty things, to which it hopes to attain by that semblance of humility. Yet these men deem themselves humble saints.

But the truly humble look not to the result of humility, but with a simple heart regard things of low degree, and gladly hold converse with them. It never once enters their mind that they are humble. Here the water flows from the well; here it follows naturally and as a matter of course, that they will cultivate a humble demeanor, humble words, places, faces and clothing, and shun so far as possible great and lofty things. Thus David says in Psalm cxxxi, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty." And Job xxii, "He that hath been humbled, shall be in glory: and he that shall bow down his eyes, he shall be saved." Hence honors always come unexpectedly upon them, and they are exalted all at unawares; for they have been simply content with their lowly station and never aspired to the heights. But the falsely humble wonder why their glory and honor are so long in coming; their secret false pride is not content with their low estate, but aspires in secret ever higher and higher.

Ps. 131:1

Job 22:29 (Vulgate)

True humility, therefore, never knows that it is humble, as I have said; for if it knew this, it would turn proud from contemplation of so fine a virtue. But it clings with all its heart and mind and senses to lowly things, sets them continually before its eyes, and ponders them in its thoughts. And because it sets them before its eyes, it cannot see itself

nor become aware of itself, much less of lofty things.[1] And therefore, when honor and elevation come, they must needs take it unawares and find it immersed in thoughts
Luke 1:29 of other things. Thus Luke tells us, in his first chapter, that Mary was troubled at the angel's saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation that could be, seeing she had never expected the like. Had it come to Caiaphas' daughter, she would not have cast in her mind what manner of salutation it was, but would straightway have hugged it to herself, and thought, "Heigh-ho! how fine a thing is this, and well bestowed."

False humility, on the other hand, never knows that it is proud; for if it knew this, it would soon grow humble from contemplation of that ugly vice. But it clings with heart and mind and senses to lofty things, sets them continually before its eyes, and ponders them in its thoughts. And because it does this, it cannot see itself nor become aware of itself. Hence honors come to it not unawares nor unexpectedly, but find it immersed in thoughts of them. But dishonor and humiliation take it unawares and when it is thinking of something far different.

It is in vain, therefore, to teach men to be humble by teaching them to set their eyes on lowly things, nor does any one become proud by setting his eyes on lofty things. Not the things, but our eyes, must be changed; for we must needs spend our life here in the midst of things both
Matt. 5:29; 18:9 lowly and lofty. It is our eye that must be plucked out,
Gen. 3:7 as Christ says. Moses does not tell us, in Genesis iii, that Adam and Eve saw different things after the fall, but he says their eyes were opened and they saw that they were naked, though they had been naked before and were not
Esther 14:16 (Douay) aware of it. Queen Esther wore a precious crown upon her head, yet she said it seemed but a filthy rag in her eyes. The lofty things were not removed out of her sight, but being a mighty queen she had them before her in great abundance, and not a lowly thing within sight; but her

[1] Cf. W. Herrmann in Prot. Realencyk., iv, 573.

eyes were humble, her heart and mind looked not on the lofty things, and thus God wrought wondrous things through her. It is thus not the things, but we, that must be changed in heart and mind. Then we shall know of ourselves how to despise and shun lofty things, and how to esteem and seek after lowly things. Then humility is truly good, and stedfast in every way, and yet is never aware that it is humble. All things are done gladly, and the heart is undisturbed, however things may shift and turn, from high to low, from great to small.

Ah, how much pride lurks behind that humble garb, speech and conduct, of which the world is to-day so full. Men despise themselves, yet so as to be despised by no one else; they fly from honors, yet so as to be pursued by honors; they shun lofty things, but in order to be esteemed and praised, and not to have their lowly things accounted all too low.

But this holy Virgin points to naught save her low estate. In it she was content to spend the remainder of her days, never seeking to be honored or exalted, nor ever becoming aware of her own humility. For humility is so tender and precious a thing it cannot abide beholding its own face; that belongs to God's eyes alone, as it is said in Psalm cxiii, "Who looketh down on the low things in heaven and earth." For if any one could see his own humility, he could judge himself worthy of salvation, and thus anticipate God's judgment; for we know that God of a truth saves the humble. Therefore God must needs reserve to Himself the right to know and look on humility, and must hide it from us by setting before our eyes things of low degree and exercising us in the same, so that we may forget to look upon ourselves. That is the purpose of the many sufferings, of death and all manner of afflictions we have to bear on earth; by means of the trouble and pain they cause us we are to pluck out the evil eye.

Ps. 113:6

Thus the little word humilitas shows us plainly that the Virgin Mary was a poor, despised and lowly

maiden, who served God in her low estate, nor knew it was so highly esteemed by Him. This should comfort us and teach us that, even though we should willingly be humbled and despised, we ought not to despair and deem God angry with us, but rather set our hope on His grace, and be concerned only lest we be not cheerful and contented enough in our low estate, and lest perchance our evil eye be too wide open and deceive us by secretly lusting after lofty things and satisfaction with self, which is the death of humility. What profit is it to the damned that they are humbled to the lowest degree, since they are not willing and content to be where they are? Again, what harm is it to all angels that they are exalted to the highest degree, so long as they do not cling to their station with false desire? In short, this verse teaches us to know God aright, because it shows us that He regards the lowly and despised. For he knows God aright, who knows that He regardeth the lowly, as we have said above. From such knowledge flows love and trust in God, whereby we yield ourselves to Him and gladly obey Him. As Jeremiah says,

Jer. 9:23f. chapter ix, "Let none glory in his wisdom, might, nor riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." And St. Paul teaches us in II

2 Cor. 10:17 Corinthians, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Now, after lauding her God and Saviour with pure and single spirit, and after truly singing the praises of His goodness by not boasting of His gifts, the Mother of God addresses herself in the next place to the praise also of His works and gifts. For, as we have seen, we must not fall upon the good gifts of God nor boast of them, but make our way through them and ascend to Him, cling to Him alone and highly esteem His goodness. Thereupon we should praise Him also in His works, in which He showed forth that goodness of His for our love, trust and praise; so that His works are but so many incentives to love and praise His bare goodness that rules over us.

Mary begins with herself and sings what He has done

for her. Thus she teaches us a twofold lesson. First, that every one of us should give heed to what God does for him rather than to all the works He does for others. For no one will be saved by what God does to another, but only by what He does to thee. When Peter asked, in John xxi, concerning John, "What shall this man do?" Christ answered and said unto him, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." That is to say, "John's works will not avail for thee; thou must set out, thyself, and await what I will do to thee." John 21:21f.

But now the world is in thrall to a dreadful abuse,—the sale and distribution of good works,—by which certain audacious spirits would assist others, especially such as live or die without good works of their own, just as if these spirits had an overplus of good works. But St. Paul plainly says in I Corinthians iii, "Each man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor"—certainly not according to any one's else. 1 Cor. 3:8

It would not be so bad if they prayed for others, or brought their works before God by way of intercession. But since they deal with their works as though they were something they had to give away, it becomes a scandalous piece of business. And, what is worst of all, they give away works of theirs of whose value in God's sight they themselves are ignorant; for God looketh not on the works, but on the heart, and on the faith by which He Himself works with us. To this they pay not the least attention, but trust only in the external works, deceiving themselves and all others beside. They have even gone so far as to persuade men to don the monk's cowl on their deathbeds, pretending that whoever dies in that sacred habit receives indulgence for all his sins and is saved.[1] Thus they have begun to save

[1] Cf. Heinrich von Kettenbach, Ein Sermon von der christlichen Kirche (1522): "Der mainet, wenn er tod ein münchskutten anhab, drin vergraben werd, so sei er sicher des ewigen Lebens" (Flugschriften aus der Reformationszeit, ii, 101). Also other references in Luther's Warnung an seine lieben Deutschen (1531), Weimar Edition, xxx[3], 316; and in his Verantwortung der aufgelegten Aufruhr (1533), Weimar, xxxviii, 105.

men not only with the works but with the clothes of others. Unless we see to it, I fear the evil spirit will drive them on to bring people to heaven by means of monastic diet, cells and burial. Great God, what gross darkness is this! A monk's cap make a man pious and save him! Where then is the need of faith? Let us all turn monk or all die in cowls. What quantities of cloth would in this way alone go to the making of monks' cowls! Beware, beware of the wolves in such sheep's clothing; they will deceive you and rend you limb from limb. Remember that God also has His work in you, and base your salvation on no other works than those God works in you alone, as you see the Virgin Mary do here. To let the intercessions of others assist you in this, is right and proper; we ought all to pray and work for one another. But none should depend on the works of others, without the works of God in himself. Every one should with all diligence so regard himself and his God as though God and he were the only persons in heaven and on earth, and as though God were dealing with no one else than with him. Thereupon he may also glance at the works of others.

Matt. 7:15

In the second place, she teaches us that every one should strive to be foremost in praising God by showing forth the works He has done to him, and then by praising Him for the works He has done to others. Thus we read that Paul and Barnabas declared to the apostles the works God had wrought by them, and that the apostles in turn rehearsed those He had wrought by them. The same was done by the apostles, in Luke xxiv, with respect to the appearances of Christ after His resurrection. Thus there arose a common rejoicing and praising of God, each one praising the grace bestowed on another, yet most of all that bestowed on himself, however much more modest it was than that of the other. So simple-hearted were they that all desired to be foremost not in possessing the gifts, but in praising and loving God, for God Himself and His bare goodness were sufficient for them, however small His

Acts 15:12

Luke 24: 34f.

gifts. But the hirelings and mercenaries grow green with envy when they observe that they are not first and foremost in possessing the good things of God; instead of praising, they murmur because they are made equal to or lower than others, like the husbandmen in the Gospel, Matthew xx, who murmured against the goodman of the house, not that he did them any wrong, but because he made them equal unto the other laborers by giving to all the same penny. Matt. 20:11f.

Even so we find men to-day who do not praise the goodness of God, because they cannot see that they have received the same things as St. Peter or any other of the saints, or as this or that man living on earth. They imagine they also would praise and love God if they possessed as much as these, and they despise the good gifts of God which are showered so abundantly upon them, and which they altogether overlook—such as life, body, reason, goods, honor, friends, the ministration of the sun and all created things. And even if they had all the good things of Mary, they yet would not recognise God in them nor praise Him because of them. For, as Christ says in Luke xvi, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much." Therefore, because they despise the little, and the few things, they are not worthy of the much, and the great things. But if they praised God in the little, the much would also be added unto them. They act as they do because they look above them and not beneath them; if they looked beneath them they would find many that have not the half of what they have, and yet are content in God and sing His praise. A bird pipes its lay and is happy in the gifts it has; nor does it murmur because it has not the gift of speech. A dog frisks gayly about and is content, even though he is without the gift of reason. All animals live in contentment and serve God, loving and praising Him. Only the evil, grudging eye of man is never satisfied, nor can it ever be really satisfied, because of its Luke 16:10 Matt. 20:15

Luke 14:7 ff. ingratitude and pride. It would always have the best place at the feast and be the chief guest; it is not willing to honor God, but would rather be honored by God.

There is a tale,[1] dating back to the days of the Council of Constance, of two cardinals who, riding abroad, beheld a shepherd standing in a field and weeping. One of the two cardinals, being a good soul and unwilling to pass by without offering the man some comfort, rode up to him and enquired why he wept. The shepherd, who was weeping sore, was a long time replying to the cardinal's question. At last, pointing his finger at a toad, he said: "I weep because God has made me so well favored a creature, and not hideous like this reptile, and I have never yet acknowledged it nor thanked and praised Him therefor." The cardinal smote upon his breast and trembled so violently he fell from his mount. He had to be carried to his lodging, and cried out: "Ah, St. Augustine, how truly hast thou said, 'The unlearned start up and take heaven by violence, and we with all our learning, see how we wallow us in flesh and blood!'"[2] Now I trow this shepherd was neither rich nor comely nor powerful; nevertheless he had so clear an insight into God's good gifts and pondered them so deeply that he found therein more than he could comprehend.

Mary confesses that the foremost work God wrought for her was that He regarded her, which is indeed the greatest of His works, on which all the rest depend and from which they all derive. For where it comes to pass that God turns His face toward one to regard him, there is naught but grace and salvation, and all gifts and works must needs follow. Thus we read in Genesis iv, that He had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. Here is the origin of the many prayers in the Psalter,—that God would lift up His countenance upon us, that He would not hide

Gen. 4:4f.

---

[1] Cf. Köhler, Luther und die Kirchengeschichte, p. 184. Luther had used this incident before; cf. Weimar Ed., i, 446 f.

[2] Confessions, VIII, viii, 19.

His countenance from us, that He would make His face shine upon us, and the like. And that Mary herself regards this as the chief thing, she indicates by saying, "Behold, since He hath regarded me, all generations shall call me blessed."

Note that she does not say men shall speak all manner of good of her, praise her virtues, exalt her virginity or her humility, or sing of what she has done. But for this one thing alone, that God regarded her, will men call her blessed. That is to give all the glory to God as completely as it can be done. Therefore she points to God's regard and says, E c c e e n i m , etc., "For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." That is, beginning with the time when God regarded my low estate, I shall be called blessed. Not she is praised thereby, but God's grace toward her. Nay, she is despised, and despises herself in that she says her low estate was regarded by God. Therefore she also mentions her blessedness before enumerating the works that God did unto her, and ascribes all to the fact that God regarded her low estate.

From this we may learn how to show her the honor and devotion that are her due. How ought one to address her? Keep these words in mind and they will teach you to say: "O blessed Virgin, Mother of God, thou wast naught and all despised; yet God in His grace regarded thee and wrought such great things in thee. Thou wast worthy of none of them, but the rich and abundant grace of God was upon thee, far above any merit of thine. Hail to thee: blessed art thou, from thenceforth and forever, in finding such a God." Nor need you fear that she will take it amiss if we call her unworthy of such grace. For, of a truth, she did not lie when she herself acknowledged her unworthiness and nothingness, which God regarded, not because of any merit in her, but solely by reason of His grace.

But she does take it amiss that the vain chatterers preach and write so many things about her merits. They are set on proving their own skill, and fail to see how they

spoil the Magnificat, make the Mother of God a liar, and diminish the grace of God. For, in proportion as we ascribe merit and worthiness to her, we lower the grace of God and diminish the truth of the Magnificat. The angel
Luke 1:28 salutes her but as highly favored of God, and because the Lord is with her, wherefore she is blessed among women. Hence all those who heap so great praise and honor upon her head are not far from making an idol of her, as though she were concerned that men should honor her and look to her for good things, when in truth she thrusts this from her, and would have us honor God in her and come through her to a good confidence in His grace.

Whoever, therefore, would show her the proper honor must not regard her alone and by herself, but set her in the presence of God and far beneath Him, must there strip her of all honor, and regard her low estate, as she says; he should then marvel at the exceeding abundant grace of God Who regards, embraces, and blesses so poor and despised a mortal. Thus regarding her, you will be moved to love and praise God for His grace, and drawn to look for all good things to Him, Who does not reject but graciously regards poor and despised and lowly mortals. Thus your heart will be strengthened in faith and love and hope. What, think you, would please her more than to have you thus come through her to God, and learn from her to put your hope and trust in Him, notwithstanding your despised and lowly estate, in life as well as in death? She does not want you to come to her, but through her to God. Again, nothing would please her better than to have you turn in fear from all lofty things on which men set their hearts, seeing that even in His mother God neither found nor desired aught of high degree.

But the masters who so depict and portray the blessed Virgin that there is found in her naught to be despised, but only great and lofty things—what is it they do but contrast us with her instead of her with God?[1] Whereby

[1] That is, they show how far she is above us, and not how far she is below God.

they make us timid and afraid, and hide the Virgin's comfortable picture, as the images are covered over in Lent.[1] For they deprive us of her example, from which we might take comfort; they make an exception of her and set her above all examples. But she should be, and herself gladly would be, the foremost example of the grace of God, to incite all the world to trust in this grace and to love and praise it, so that the hearts of all men should through her be filled with such knowledge of God that they might confidently say, "O thou blessed Virgin, Mother of God, what great comfort hath God shown us in thee, by so graciously regarding thy unworthiness and low estate. Hereby we are encouraged to believe that He will henceforth not despise us poor and lowly ones, but graciously regard us also, according to thy example."

Pray, tell; if David, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mary Magdalene, and the like, are examples to strengthen our trust in God and our faith, by reason of the great grace bestowed on them without their worthiness, for the comforting of all men, will not also the blessed Mother of God gladly be such an example to all the world? But now she cannot be this because of the fulsome eulogists and empty chatterers, who do not show the people, from this verse, how the exceeding riches of God joined in her with her utter poverty, the divine honor with her low estate, the divine glory with her shame, the divine greatness with her smallness, the divine goodness with her lack of merit, the divine grace with her unworthiness.

Hereby our love and affection toward God would grow and increase with all confidence, to which end indeed her life and works, as well as the lives and works of all the saints, have been recorded. But now we find those who come to her for help and comfort, as though she were a divine being, so that I fear there is now more idolatry in

---

[1] As a sign of Lenten mourning, the images, altar-pieces, and holy pictures are draped in many Roman Catholic churches and houses.

the world than ever before. But enough of this for the present.

The Latin phrase, omnes generationes, I have rendered Kinds Kind—children's children, although literally it means "all generations." But that is an obscure expression, and many have been hard put to it by this passage to know how it can be that all generations shall bless her, since the Jews, the heathens, and many wicked Christians blaspheme her or scorn to call her blessed. They understand the word "generations" of the totality of mankind, whereas its meaning here is rather the line of natural descent, as father, son, grandson, and so on, each member being called a generation. The Virgin Mary means to say simply that her praise will be sung from one generation to another, so that there will never be a time when she shall not be praised. This she indicates by saying, "Behold, from henceforth all generations, etc."—that is, it begins now and will continue throughout all generations, unto children's children.[1]

The word μακαριοῦσι means more than simply to call blessed; its meaning is rather to bless,[2] or to make blessed. This consists not merely in saying the words, bending the knee, bowing the head, doffing the hat, making images or building churches; for this even the wicked can do. But it is done with all one's strength and with downright sincerity, when the heart, moved by her low estate and God's gracious regard of her, as we have seen, rejoices in God and says or thinks with all its heart, "O thou blessed Virgin Mary!" So to bless her is to accord her the honor that is her due, as we have seen.

"For He That is Mighty hath Done to me Great Things: and Holy is His Name"

Here she sings in one breath of all the works that God hath done to her, and observes the proper order. In the

[1] Cf. Introduction, p. 121. [2] Seligen.

preceding verse she sang of God's regard and gracious goodwill toward her, which is indeed the greatest and chief work of grace, as we have said. Now she comes to the works and gifts. For God indeed gives to some many good things and richly adorns them, as He did Lucifer in heaven. He scatters His gifts broadcast among the multitude; but He does not therefore regard them. His good things are merely gifts, that last but for a season; but His grace and regard are the inheritance, which lasts forever, as St. Paul says in Romans vi, "The grace of God is eternal life." In giving us the gifts He gives but what is His, but in His grace and His regard of us He gives His very self. In the gifts we touch His hand, but in His gracious regard we receive His heart, spirit, mind and will. Hence the blessed Virgin puts His regard in the first and highest place, and does not begin by saying, "All generations shall call me blessed, because He hath done to me great things," as this verse says; but she begins, "He hath regarded my low estate," as the preceding verse shows. Where God's gracious will is, there are also His gifts; but, on the other hand, where His gifts are, there is not also His gracious will. This verse therefore logically follows the preceding verse. We read in Genesis xxv that Abraham gave gifts unto the sons of his concubines, but to Isaac, his natural son by his true helpmate Sarah, he gave the whole inheritance. Thus God would not have His true children put their trust in His goods and gifts, spiritual or temporal, however great they be, but in His grace and in Himself, yet without despising the gifts.

Rom. 6:23 (Vulgate)

Gen. 25:17

Nor does Mary enumerate any good things in particular, but gathers them all together in one word and says, "He hath done to me great things," that is, "All that He hath done to me is great." She teaches us hereby that the greater devotion there is in the heart, the fewer words are uttered. For she feels that however she may strive and try, she cannot express it in words. Therefore these few words of the Spirit are so great and profound that no one can com-

prehend them without having, at least in part, the same Spirit. But for the unspiritual, who deal in many words and much loud noise, such words seem utterly inadequate and wholly without salt or savor. Christ also teaches us,
Matt. 6:7 in Matthew vi, not to speak much when we pray, as the Gentiles do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Even so there is to-day in the churches a great ringing of bells, blowing of trumpets, singing, shouting, and intoning, yet I fear precious little worship of God,
John 4:24 Who would be worshiped in spirit and in truth, as He says in John iv.

Prov. 27:14 Solomon says, in Proverbs xxvii, "He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him." For such a one awakens the suspicion that he is endeavoring to adorn an evil cause; he protests too much and only defeats his own end. On the other hand, he that curses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising up early in the morning (that is, not indifferently, but with great zeal and urgency), is to be regarded as a praiser of him. For men do not believe him, but deem him impelled by hatred and a wicked heart; he hurts his own cause and helps his neighbor's. In the same way, to think to worship God with many words and a great noise, is to count Him either deaf or ignorant, and to suppose we must waken or instruct Him. Such an opinion of God tends to His shame and dishonor rather than to His worship. But when one ponders well His divine works in the depths of one's heart, and regards them with wonder and gratitude, so that one breaks out from very ardor into sighs and groanings rather than into speech; when the words, not nicely chosen nor prescribed, flow forth in such wise that the spirit comes seething with them, and the words live and have hands and feet, yea, that the whole body and life with all its members strives and strains for utterance—that is indeed a worship of God in spirit and in truth, and such words are all fire, light and life. As David says, in

Psalm cxix, "Lord, Thy word is exceeding refined";[1] and again, "My lips shall utter[2] a hymn"—even as boiling water overflows and seethes, unable to contain itself for the great heat within the pot. Of this sort are the words of the blessed Virgin in this hymn of hers, few, but profound and mighty. Such souls St. Paul calls, in Romans xii, spiritu ferventes, fervent and seething in spirit, and teaches us to be even so. Ps. 119: 140, 171 Rom. 12:11

The "great things" are nothing less than that she became the Mother of God, in which work so many and such great good things are bestowed on her as pass man's understanding. For on this there follows all honor, all blessedness, and her unique place in the whole of mankind, among which she has no equal, namely, that she had a child by the Father in heaven, and such a Child. She herself is unable to find a name for this work, it is too exceeding great; all she can do is break out in the fervent cry, "They are great things," impossible to describe or define. Hence men have crowded all her glory into a single word, calling her the Mother of God. No one can say anything greater of her or to her, though he had as many tongues as there are leaves on the trees, or grass in the fields, or stars in the sky, or sand by the sea.[3] It needs to be pondered in the heart, what it means to be the Mother of God.

Mary also freely ascribes all to God's grace, not to her merit. For though she was without sin,[4] yet that grace was too surpassing great for her to deserve it in any way. How should a creature deserve to become the Mother of God! Though certain scribblers make much ado about her worthiness for such motherhood, I will yet believe her rather than them. She says her low estate was regarded by God, nor was that a reward for anything she had done,

---

[1] Luther has, ganz feurig, following the Vulgate, ignitum vehementer.

[2] Heraus schäumen; Vulgate, eructabunt.

[3] Cf. Prot. Realencyk., xii, 317, 43 ff.

[4] Cf. KÖSTLIN, Luthers Theologie, 2d ed., ii, 375 (Engl. Trans., ii, 358 f.). See Introduction, above, p. 120.

but, "He hath done to me great things"; He hath done this of His own accord without any doing of mine. For never in all her life did she think to become the Mother of God, still less did she prepare or make herself meet for it. The
Luke 1:29 tidings took her all unawares, as Luke reports. But merit is not unprepared for its reward, but deliberately seeks and awaits it.

It is no valid argument against this to cite the words of the hymn, Regina coeli laetare,[1] "Whom thou didst merit to bear," and again, "Whom thou wast worthy to bear." For the selfsame things are sung of the holy Cross, which was a thing of wood and incapable of merit. The words are to be understood in this sense: In order to become the Mother of God, she must needs be a woman, a virgin, of the tribe of Judah, and must believe the angelic message in order to become fit therefor, as the Scriptures foretold. As the wood had no other merit or worthiness than that it was suited to be made into a cross and was appointed by God for that purpose, even so her sole worthiness to become the Mother of God lay in her being fit and appointed for it; so that it might be pure grace and not a reward, that we might not take away from God's grace, worship and honor by ascribing too great things to her. For it is better to take away too much from her than from the grace of God. Indeed, we cannot take away too much from her, since she was created out of nothing, like all other creatures. But we can easily take away too much from God's grace, which is a perilous thing to do and not well pleasing to her. It is necessary also to keep within bounds and not make too much of calling her "Queen of heaven,"[2] which is a true enough name and yet does not make her a goddess, who could grant gifts or render aid, as

[1] "Joy to thee, O queen of heaven," an Eastertide anthem of the blessed Virgin, the recitation of which is prescribed in the Roman Breviary from Compline of Holy Saturday until None of the Saturday after Pentecost. Of unknown authorship, it has been traced to the XII Century. See Cath. Encyclop., xii, 718; Julian, Dict. of Hymnology, 1691 f., also 954.

[2] In the Regina coeli. See preceding note.

some suppose, that pray and flee to her rather than to God. She gives nothing, God gives all, as we see in the words that follow,—"He that is mighty." Verily, in these words she takes away all might and power from every creature and bestows them on God alone. What great boldness and robbery on the part of so young and tender a maiden! She dares, by this one word, to make all the strong feeble, all the mighty weak, all the wise foolish, all the famous despised, and God alone the possessor of all strength, wisdom and glory. For this is the meaning of the phrase, "He that is mighty." There is none that does anything, but as St. Paul says in Ephesians i, "God worketh all in all," and all creatures' works are God's works. Even as we confess in the Creed, "I believe in God the Father, the Almighty." He is almighty because it is His power alone that works in all and through all and over all. Thus St. Anna, the mother of Samuel, sings in I Samuel ii, "By strength shall no man prevail." And St. Paul writes in II Corinthians iii, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." This is a most important article of faith, including many things; it utterly puts down all pride, arrogance, blasphemy, fame, and false trust, and exalts God alone. It points out the reason why God alone is to be exalted,—because He does all things. That is easily said, but hard to believe and to translate into life. For they who carry it out in their lives are most peacable, composed and simple hearted folk, who lay no claim to anything, well knowing it is not theirs but God's.

Eph. 1:11

1 Sam. 2:9

2 Cor. 3:5

This, then, is the meaning of these words of the Mother of God: "In all those great and good things there is naught of mine, but He Who alone doeth all things, and Whose power worketh in all, hath done to me such great things." For the word "mighty" does not denote a quiescent power, as one says of a temporal king that he is mighty, even though he be sitting still and doing nothing. But it denotes an energetic power, a continuous activity, that works and

operates without ceasing. For God does not rest, but works
John 5:17 without ceasing, as Christ says in John v, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." In the same sense St. Paul
Eph. 3:20 says in Ephesians iii, "He is able to do above all that we ask"—that is, He always does more than we ask; that is His way and thus His power works. That is why I said Mary does not desire to be an idol; she does nothing, God does all. We ought to call upon her, that for her sake God may grant and do what we request. Thus also all other saints are to be invoked, so that the work may be every way God's alone.[1]

Therefore she adds, "And holy is His name." That is to say, "As I lay no claim to the work, neither do I to the name and fame. For the name and fame belong to Him alone Who does the work. It is not meet that one should do the work, and another have the fame and take the glory. I am but the workshop wherein He performs His work; I had nothing to do with the work itself. None, therefore, should praise me or give me the glory for becoming the Mother of God, but God alone and His work are to be honored and praised in me. It is enough to congratulate me and call me blessed, because God used me and wrought in me His works." Behold, how completely she traces all to God, lays claim to no works, no honor, no fame. She conducts herself as before, when as yet she had naught of all this; she demands no higher honors than before. She is not puffed up, does not vaunt herself, nor proclaim with a loud voice that she is become the Mother of God. She seeks not any glory, but goes about her wonted household duties, milking the cows, cooking the meals, washing pots and kettles, sweeping out the rooms, and performing the work of maid-servant or housemother in lowly and despised tasks, as though she cared naught for such exceeding great gifts and graces. She was esteemed among other women and her neighbors no more highly than before, nor desired to be, but remained a poor townswoman, one of the great

[1] Cf. Köstlin, Luthers Theologie, ii, 23–26 (Engl. Trans., i, 465–469).

multitude. O how simple and pure a heart was hers, how strange a soul was this! What great things are hidden here under this lowly exterior! How many will have come in contact with her, have talked, eaten and drunk with her, who perchance despised her and counted her but a common, poor and simple village maiden, and who, had they known, would have fled from her in terror.[1]

That is the meaning of the clause, "Holy is His name." For "holy" means separated, and dedicated to God, that none should touch or defile it, but all should hold it in honor. And "name" means a good report, fame, praise and honor. Thus every one should let God's name alone, not lay hands on it nor appropriate it to himself. It is a figure hereof when we read, in Exodus xxx, that Moses made an oil of holy ointment, at God's command, and straightly forbade that it be poured on any man's flesh. That is, no man should ascribe to himself the name of God. For we desecrate God's name when we suffer ourselves to be praised or honored, or when we take pleasure in ourselves and boast of our works or our possessions, as is the way of the world, that constantly dishonors and desecrates the name of God. But as the works are God's alone, so too the name should be His. And all that thus hallow His name and deny themselves all honor and glory, rightly honor His name, and therefore are hallowed by it. Thus we read, in Exodus xxx, that the precious ointment was so holy it hallowed whatever it touched. That is, when God's name is hallowed by us, so that we lay claim to no work, fame or self-satisfaction therein, it is rightly honored, and in turn touches and hallows us.

Ex. 30:25 ff.

We must therefore be on our guard, because we cannot do without God's good things while we live on earth, and therefore cannot be without name and honor. When men accord us praise and honor, we ought to profit by the example of the Mother of God and at all times arm ourselves with this verse to make the proper reply and to use such

[1] Cf. Introduction, pp. 120 f.

honor and praise aright. We should openly say, or at least think in our heart: "O Lord God, Thine is this work that is being praised and celebrated. Thine be also the name. Not I have done it, but Thou, Who art able to do all things, and holy is Thy name." We ought neither to reject this praise and honor as though they were wrong, nor to despise them as though they were naught; but refuse to accept them as too precious or noble, and ascribe them to Him in heaven, to Whom they belong. This is one lesson from this precious verse. It also furnishes us an answer to the question that some may ask,—whether no man ought to honor another. St. Paul indeed says, in Romans xii, that we ought to strive to prefer one another in honor. But no one should accept the honor as accorded to him nor take it to himself, but should hallow it and ascribe it to God, to Whom it belongs, by performing all manner of good works, from which honor comes. For no one should lead a dishonorable life. But if he is to live honorably, there must needs be honor shown him. Yet, as an honorable life is the gift and work of God, so too the name should be His alone, holy and undefiled by self-complacency. For this we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Hallowed be Thy name."

Rom. 12:10

"And His Mercy is on them that Fear Him: From Generation to Generation"

We must accustom ourselves to the scriptural usage according to which generations are, as we have said above,[1] the succession of those born in the course of nature, one human being descending from another. Hence the German word Geschlechter is not an adequate translation, though I do not know a better. For by Geschlechter we understand families or blood-relations. But the word here means the natural succession from father to son and son's son, each several member being called a generation; so that the following would not be an ill translation—

[1] See p. 158.

"and His mercy endureth to children's children of them that fear Him." This is a very common expression in Holy Writ, and has its origin in the words of God under the First Commandment, spoken on Mount Sinai to Moses and all the people—"I am thy God, strong and jealous, Ex. 20:5f. visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto many thousand generations of them that love me and keep my commandments."

Having done singing of herself and the good things she had from God, and having sung His praises, Mary now rehearses all the works of God that He works in general in all men, and sings His praises also for them, teaching us to understand aright the work, method, nature and will of God. Many philosophers and men of great acumen have also engaged in the endeavor to find out the nature of God; they have written much about Him, one in this way, another in that, yet all have gone blind over their task and failed of the proper insight. And, indeed, it is the greatest thing in heaven and on earth, to know God aright, if that may be granted to one. This the Mother of God teaches us here in a masterly fashion, if one will but take her meaning, even as she taught the same above,[1] in and by her own experience.

How can one know God better than in the works in which He is most Himself? Whoever understands His works aright cannot fail to know His nature and will, His heart and mind. Hence, to understand His works is an art that must needs be learned. And in order that we may learn it, Mary enumerates, in the following four verses, six divine works among as many classes of persons. She divides all the world into two parts, and assigns to each side three works and three classes of men, so that either side has its exact counterpart in the other. She describes the works of God in each of these two parts, portraying Him so well that it could not be done better.

[1] See p. 130.

This division is well conceived and is borne out by other passages of Scripture. For instance, God says in Jeremiah
Jer. 9:23f. ix: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord who exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." This is a noble text and well agrees with this hymn of the Mother of God. Here we see that He, too, divides all that is in the world into three parts—wisdom, might and riches—and puts them all down by saying none should glory in these things, for none will find Him in them nor does He delight therein. Over against them He sets three others—lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness. In these things, says He, I am to be found; yea, I exercise them, so nigh am I to them; nor do I exercise them in heaven, but in the earth, where men may find me. And whoever thus understandeth Me may well glory and trust therein. For, if he be not wise, but poor in spirit, My lovingkindness is with him; if he be not mighty, but brought low, My judgment is by his side to save him; if he be not rich, but poor and needy, the more hath he of My righteousness.

Under wisdom He includes all spiritual possessions and gifts, by which a man may gain popularity, fame and a good report, as the following verse will show. Such gifts are intellect, reason, wit, knowledge, piety, virtue, a godly life, in short, whatever is in the soul that men call divine and spiritual, all great and high gifts, yet none of them God. Under might He includes all authority, nobility, friends, high station and honor, whether pertaining to temporal or to spiritual goods or persons (though there is in Scripture no spiritual authority or power, but only servants and subjects[1]), together with all the rights, liberties and privileges pertaining to the same. Under riches are included good health, beauty, pleasure, strength, and every external

[1] Cf. Vol. II, p. 246.

good that may befall the body. Opposed to these three are the poor in spirit, the oppressed, and they that lack the necessaries of life. Let us now consider these six works in order.

THE FIRST WORK OF GOD, WHICH IS MERCY

Of this our verse treats—"His mercy is on them that fear Him: from generation to generation." She begins with the highest and greatest things, with the spiritual and inward goods, which produce the most vain, proud and stiff-necked folk on earth. No rich or mighty man is so puffed up and bold as one such wiseacre who feels and knows that he is in the right, understands all about a matter, and is wiser than other folk. Especially when he finds he ought to give way or confess himself in the wrong, he waxes so insolent and is so utterly devoid of the fear of God that he dares to boast of being infallible, declares God is on his side and the others on the devil's side, and has the effrontery to appeal to the judgment of God. If such a one possesses the necessary power, he rushes on headlong, persecuting, condemning, slandering, slaying, banishing, and destroying all who differ with him, saying afterward he did it all to the honor and glory of God. He is as certain and sure as hardly an angel in heaven, of earning much thanks and merit before God. O how big a bubble have we here! How much God's Word has to say about such men, and how many grievous things it threatens them with! But they feel them less than the anvil feels the smith's hammer. This is a great and widespread evil.

Christ says of such men in John xvi, "The time cometh that whoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." And Psalm x has this to say of them: "As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said, I shall never be in adversity,"—as who should say, "I am in the right, I do well, God will richly reward me," etc. Such were the people of Moab, of whom we read in Isaiah xvi and

John 16:2

Ps. 10:5f.

Isa. 16:6

Jer. 48:29f. Jeremiah xlviii, "We have heard of Moab (he is exceeding proud), his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart, and his indignation is more than his strength." Thus we see that such men would gladly do more in their great arrogance than they are able. Such were the people of the Jews in their dealings with Christ and the Apostles. Such were the friends of St. Job, who argued against him with extraordinary wisdom and praised and preached God in the loftiest terms. Such folk will not give you a hearing; it is impossible that they should be in the wrong or give way. They must have their way though all the world perish. The Scripture cannot Ps. 58:4 find reproaches enough for such a lost crew. Now it calls Ps. 22:21 Ps. 7:2 them an adder stopping its ears lest it hear; now a unicorn Jer. 5:3 that cannot be tamed; again, a raging lion, a mighty im- Ps. 74:13 movable rock, a dragon, etc., etc. But nowhere are they Job 40:15f. 41:1ff. more aptly portrayed than in Job xl and xli, where He calls them b e h e m o t h . B e h e m a is a single beast, b e h e m o t h a drove of beasts, that is, a people having a bestial mind and unwilling to be ruled by the Spirit of God. In those chapters God describes it as having eyes "like the dawn of the morning," for their prudence is unbounded. "His hide is so hard that he laugheth to scorn the archer and them that shake the spear"; that is, when they are preached to, they laugh it to scorn, for their right must not be questioned. Again, "his scales are joined one to another, that no air can come between them;" that is, they hold so closely together that no spirit of God can come into them. "His heart," says the Lord, "is as firm as a smith's anvil"; it is the body of the devil. Wherefore He also ascribes the same things to the devil, in this passage. Such, above all others, are the pope and his herd to-day and these many days. They do all of these things, and worse than were ever done; there is no hearing nor giving way, it profits naught to speak, to counsel, beg, or threaten. It is simply, "We are in the right," and there is an end of it, in despite of every one else, though it be the whole world.

But some one might say: "How is that? Are we not bound to defend the right? Should we let the truth go? Are we not commanded to die for the sake of the right and the truth? Did not the holy martyrs suffer for the sake of the Gospel? And Christ Himself, did not He desire to be in the right? It happens indeed that such men are now and then in the right publicly (and as they prate, before God) and that they do wisely and well." I reply: Here it is high time and most necessary that we open our eyes, for here lies the crux of the whole matter. Everything depends on our proper understanding of "being in the right." It is true, we are to suffer all things for the sake of the truth and the right, and not to deny it, however unimportant the matter be. It may also be that those men are now and then in the right; but they spoil all by not rightly asserting their right, by not going about it in fear, nor setting God before their eye. They deem it sufficient that it is right, and then desire to continue and carry it out by their own power. Thus they turn their right into a wrong, even if it was in itself right. But it is much more dangerous when they only think they are in the right, yet are not certain; as they do in the important matters that pertain to God and His right. Let us, however, deal first with the more tangible human right, and use a simple illustration that all may grasp.

Is it not true that money, property, body, wife, child, friends, and the like, are good things created and given by God Himself? Since, then, they are God's gifts and not your own, suppose He were to try you, to learn whether you were willing to let them go for His sake and to cleave to Him rather than to such gifts of His. Suppose He raised up an enemy, who deprived you of them in whole or in part, or you lost them by death or some other mischance. Do you think you would have just cause to rage and storm, and to take them again by force, or to sulk impatiently until they were restored to you? And if you said that they were good things and God's creatures, made

with His own hands, and that, since all the Scriptures called such things good, you were resolved to fulfil God's Word and defend or get back such goods at cost of life and limb, or not willingly to suffer their loss nor let them go with patience—what a farce would that be! To do right in this case, you should not rush in pellmell, but fear God and say, "Dear Lord, they are good things and gifts of Thine, as Thine own Word and Scripture saith; nevertheless I know not whether Thou wilt permit me to keep them. Did I know I was not to have them, I would not move a finger to get them back. Did I know that Thou wouldst rather have them remain in my possession than in that of others, I would serve Thy will by taking them back at risk of life and property. But now, since I know neither, and see that for the present Thou sufferest them to be taken from me, I commit the case to Thee. I will await what I am to do, and be ready to have them or to do without them."

That, mark you, is a right soul, and one that fears God. There is God's mercy, as the Mother of God sings. Hence we can see why in times past, Abraham, David, and the people of Israel waged war and slew many. They went into battle by the will of God, they stood in fear, and fought not for the sake of the goods, but because God commanded them to fight; as the narratives show, in which this command of God is usually set forth at the beginning. In this way the truth is not denied, for the truth declares they are good things and God's creatures. But the same truth declares also and teaches that you should let such good things go, be ready at all times to do without them, if God so wills it, and ever cleave to God alone. The truth, by saying they are good, does not compel you to take the good things back again, nor to say they are not good, but it does compel you to regard them with equanimity, and to confess that they are good and not evil.

In the same manner we must treat the right and the manifold good things of reason or wisdom. Who can doubt that right is a good thing and a gift of God? God's Word

itself says right is good, and no one should admit that his good and righteous cause is unrighteous or evil, but should sooner die for it and let go everything that is not God. To do otherwise would be to deny God and His Word, for He says right is good and not evil. But if such right is wrested from you or suppressed, would you therefore cry out, storm and rage, and slay the whole world? Some do this; they cry to heaven, work all manner of mischief, ruin land and people, and fill the world with war and bloodshed. How do you know whether or not it is God's will that you keep such a gift and right? It belongs to Him, and He can take it from you to-day or to-morrow, outwardly or inwardly, by friend or foe, just as He will. He tries you to see whether you will dispense with your right for His will's sake, be in the wrong and suffer wrong, endure shame for Him and cleave to Him alone. If you fear God and think, "Lord, it is Thine; I will not keep it unless I know Thou willest me to have it. Let go what will: only be Thou my God"—then this verse is fulfilled: "His mercy is on them that fear Him," who will do naught apart from His will. Then both sides of God's Word are observed: in the first place, you confess that the right, your reason, knowledge, wisdom and all your thoughts, are right and good, as God's Word teaches. In the second place, you are willing to dispense with such good things for God's sake, to be wrongfully despoiled, and put to shame before the world, as God's Word also teaches. To confess the right and good is one thing, to obtain it is another. It is enough for you to confess that you are in the right; if you cannot obtain it, commit that to God. To you is committed the confession, the obtaining God has reserved to Himself. If He desires you also to obtain, He will perform it Himself or put it in your way, without any thought of yours, so that you must come into possession of it and win the victory, above all that you asked or thought. If He does not desire you to obtain it, let His mercy be sufficient for you. Though they deprive you of the victory of the right, they cannot

deprive you of the confession. Thus we must refrain not from the good things of God, but from wickedly and falsely cleaving to them; so that we may use them or suffer the lack of them with equanimity, and cling, whatever befall, to God alone.

O this is a thing that ought to be known to all princes and rulers who, not content with confessing the right, would straightway obtain it and win the victory, without the fear of God; who fill the world with bloodshed and misery, and think what they do is right and well done because they have or think they have a just cause. What else is that but proud and haughty Moab, that deems and makes itself worthy to possess the right, that fine and noble good and gift of God; while if it regard itself aright in the sight of God, it is not worthy to live on earth or eat a crust of bread, because of its sins. O blindness, blindness! Who is worthy of the least creature of God? Yet we desire not only to possess the highest creatures, right, wisdom and honor, but to keep them or regain possession of them with furious shedding of blood and every disaster. Thereupon we go and pray, fast, hear mass, and found churches, with such bloody, furious, raving hearts, it is a wonder the stones do not burst asunder in our face.[1]

Here arises a question. If a ruler did not defend his land and subjects against injustice, but followed my advice, made no resistance, and let all be taken from him, what would the world come to? I will briefly set down my view of the matter. Temporal power is in duty bound to defend its subjects, as I have frequently said;[2] for it bears the sword in order to keep in fear those who do not heed such divine teaching, and to compel them to leave others in peace. And in this the temporal power seeks not its own but its neighbor's profit and God's honor; it would gladly remain quiet and let its sword rust, if God had not

[1] Cf. Vol. I, p. 362.

[2] Cf., e. g., Vol. II, p. 70. See also the treatise on Secular Authority, below, pp. 228 ff.

ordained it to be a hindrance to evildoers. Yet this defence of its subjects should not be accompanied by still greater harm; that would be but to leap from the frying-pan into the fire. It is a poor defense to expose a whole city to danger for the sake of one person, or to risk the entire country for a single village or castle, unless God should have enjoined this by a special command, as He did of old time. If a robber knight robs a citizen of his property and you, my lord, lead your army against him to punish this injustice, and in so doing lay waste the whole land, who will have wrought the greater harm, the knight or the lord? David winked at many things when he was unable to punish without bringing harm upon others. All rulers must do the same. On the other hand, a citizen must endure a certain measure of suffering for the sake of the community, and not demand that all other men undergo for his sake the greater injury.

Christ did not desire the tares to be gathered up, lest the wheat also be rooted up with them. If men went to war on every provocation and passed by no insult, we should never be at peace and have naught but destruction besides. Therefore, right or wrong is never a sufficient cause indiscriminately to punish or make war. It is a sufficient cause to punish within bounds and without destroying another. The lord or ruler must ever look to what will profit the whole mass of his subjects rather than any one portion. That householder will never grow rich, who, because one has plucked a feather from his goose, flings the whole goose after him. There is not now time to go into the subject of war.[1] Matt. 13:29f.

We must do the same in things divine, such as faith and the Gospel, which are the highest goods and which no one should let go. But the right, favor, honor, and acceptance of them we must cast in the balance and commit them to God. We should be concerned not to obtain, but to con-

[1] He did this later, in the treatise Ob Kriegsleute auch in seligem Stande sein können (1526), Weimar Ed., xix, 623 ff. See Vol. V.

fess, and willingly endure being reviled before all the world, being persecuted, banished, burned at the stake, or otherwise slain, as unrighteous, deceivers, heretics, apostates, blasphemers, and what not; for then God's mercy is upon us. They cannot take the faith and the truth from us, even though they take our life. There are but few, however, who rage and fret to obtain and to win the victory in this matter, as men do in temporal goods and rights. There are also few who confess it aright and on principle. But we should grieve and lament for the others who through the defeat of the Gospel are hindered in their soul's salvation. Nay, we should much rather lament and labor (yet as in the sight of God) because of the injury to souls inflicted by the Moabites for the sake of their own temporal goods and rights, as we said above.[1] For it is a lamentable thing when God's Word does not win the victory, lamentable not so far as the confessor is concerned, but so far as they are concerned who should have been saved by it. Hence we find in the prophets, in Christ, and in the Apostles, such sorrow and sore lamentation for the suppression of the Word of God, who yet were glad to bear any injustice and injury. For far more depends on the obtaining of this good than of any other. Yet no one should employ force nor keep or regain such right of the Gospel by rage and unreason; he should rather humble himself before God as being perchance not worthy that such a great and good thing be done through him, and commit all to His mercy with prayer and lamentation.

This, then, is the first work of God—that He is merciful to all who are ready to do without their own opinion, right, wisdom, and all spiritual goods, and willing to be poor in spirit. These are they who truly fear God, who count themselves not worthy of anything, be it never so small, and are glad to be naked and bare before God and man; who ascribe whatever they have to His pure grace, bestowed on the unworthy; who use it with praise and fear and thanks-

[1] See pp. 169 f.

giving, as though it belonged to another, and who seek not their own will, desire or honor, but His alone to Whom it belongs. Mary also indicates how much more gladly God shows such mercy, which is His noblest work, than its counterpart, His strength; for she says this work of God endures without ceasing from generation to generation of them that fear Him, while His strength endures but unto the third and fourth generation, and has in the verse that follows no time nor limit set to it.

THE SECOND WORK OF GOD: BREAKING SPIRITUAL PRIDE

"He hath Showed Strength with His Arm: He hath Scattered the Proud in the Imagination of their Hearts"

I trust no one will be confused by my translation. Above I rendered this verse, "He showeth strength," and here, "He hath showed strength."[1] I have done this in order that we may the better understand these words, which are not bound to any one time, but are intended to set forth in general the works of God which He always has done, always does, and always will do. Hence the following would be a fair translation: "God is a Lord Whose works are of such a nature that He mightily scatters the proud and is merciful to them that fear Him."

The "arm" of God means in the Scriptures God's own power, by which He works without the medium of any creature. This work is done quietly and in secret, and none becomes aware of it until all is accomplished; so that this power, or arm, can be known and understood only by faith. Wherefore Isaiah complains that so few have faith in this arm, saying, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" These things are so because, as he goes on to say, all is done in secret and with-

Isa. 53:1

Isa. 53:2ff.

[1] See Introduction, p. 121.

Hab. 3:4 out the semblance of power. We also read in Habakkuk iii, that there are horns coming out of God's hands, to indicate His mighty power; and yet it is said, "there was the hiding of his power." What is the meaning of this?

It means that, when God works by means of His creatures, it is plainly seen where the strength is and where the weakness. Hence the proverb, "God helps them that help themselves."[1] For example, whichever prince wins a battle, it is seen that God defeated the other by him. When a man is devoured by a wolf or otherwise injured, it is evident that it took place by means of the creature. Thus God makes or breaks one creature by means of another. Whoever falls, falls; whoever stands, stands.

But it is otherwise when God Himself works, with His own arm. Then a thing is destroyed or raised up before one knows it, and no one sees it done. Such works as these He does only among the two divisions of mankind, the godly and the wicked. He suffers the godly to become powerless and to be brought low, until everyone supposes their end is nigh, when in these very things He is present to them with all His power, yet so hidden and in secret that even they that suffer the oppression feel it not, but only believe. There is the fulness of God's power and His outstretched arm. For where man's strength ends, God's strength begins, provided faith be present and wait on Him. And when the oppression comes to an end, it becomes manifest what great strength was hidden underneath the weakness. Even so, Christ was powerless on the cross, and yet He there performed His mightiest work and vanquished sin, death, world, hell, devil, and all evil. Thus all the martyrs were strong and overcame. Thus, too, all who suffer and are
Joel 3:10 oppressed overcome. Therefore it is said in Joel iii, "Let the weak say, I am strong"—yet in faith, and without feeling it until it is accomplished.

Again, God suffers the other half of mankind to become

---

[1] Gott hilft den Stärksten.

great and mightily to exalt themselves. He withdraws His power from them and lets them puff themselves up in their own power alone. For where man's strength begins, God's strength ends. When their bubble is fullblown, and everyone supposes them to have won and overcome, and they themselves feel safe and secure and have achieved, then God pricks the bubble and all is over. The poor dupes do not know that even while they are puffing themselves up and growing strong they are forsaken of God, and God's arm is not with them. Therefore their prosperity has its day, disappears like a bubble, and is as if it had never been. To this the psalmist refers in Psalm lxxiii. He was troubled when he saw the riches, pride and prosperity of the wicked in the world. At last he said, "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I looked into the hidden things of God;[1] then understood I their last end. For I saw that for their own deceit they are exalted; when they were lifted up thou hast cast them down. How are they brought into destruction as in a moment! they are as though they had never been, as a dream when one awaketh." And Psalm xxxvii, "I have seen the wicked highly exalted, and lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon. And I passed by, and lo, he was not: and I sought him, and his place was not found."

Ps. 73:16 ff. (Vulgate)

Ps. 37:35 f. (Vulgate)

It is because of our lack of faith that we cannot tarry a little, until the time comes when we too shall see how the mercy of God together with all His might is with them that fear Him, and the arm of God with all severity and power against the proud. O faithless! we grope with our hands after the mercy and the arm of God, and, unable to feel them, suppose our cause lost and that of our enemies won, as though God's grace and mercy had forsaken us and His arm turned against us. This we do because we do not know His proper works, and therefore do not know Him, neither His mercy nor His arm. For He must and

[1] Die Heimlichkeit Gottes. The Vulgate has sanctuarium.

will be known by faith; hence our sense and our reason must close their eyes. This is the eye that offends us; therefore it must be plucked out and cast from us. Matt. 5:29

These, then, are the two contrary works of God, from which we learn that He is minded to be far from the wise and prudent, and nigh unto the foolish and those compelled to be in the wrong. This makes God worthy of love and praise, and comforts soul and body and all our powers.

We come to the words, "He scattereth the proud in the imagination of their hearts." This scattering comes to pass, as we have said, when their prudence is at its height, and when they are filled with their own wisdom; then, verily, God's wisdom is no longer with them. And in what better way could He scatter them than by depriving them of His eternal wisdom and suffering them to be filled with their own temporal, shortlived and perishing wisdom? For Mary says, "the proud in the imagination of their hearts"—that is, those who delight in their own opinions, thoughts and reason, which not God but their heart inspires, and who deem them alone right and good and wise above all others. Wherefore they exalt themselves above them that fear God, put down and pour shame upon the opinion and right of others, and persecute them to the utmost, so that their own cause may by all means be right and be maintained. When they have accomplished this, they boast and loudly brag; even as the Jews did with Christ, who saw not that their cause was destroyed and brought to naught, but Christ exalted to glory.

We observe, then, that our verse treats of spiritual goods, and how one can know God's twofold work therein. It shows us that we ought gladly to be poor in spirit, and in the wrong, and let our adversaries be in the right. They will not long continue; the promise is too strong for them. They cannot escape God's arm, but must succumb and be brought as low as they once were high, if we will but believe it. But where there is no faith, God does not perform such works; He withdraws His arm and works openly by means of

the creatures, as we said above.[1] But these are not His proper works, whereby He may be known, for in them the creatures' strength is mingled with His own. They are not God's own pure works, as they must be when no one works with Him and He alone does the work, which He does when we become powerless and oppressed in our right or our opinion, and suffer God's power to work in us. What precious works are these!

With what mastery does Mary here hit the perverse hypocrites! She looks not on their hands nor in their eyes, but in their hearts, when she says, "the proud in the imagination of their hearts." She refers in particular to the enemies of divine truth, such as the Jews in their opposition to Christ, and the men of to-day. For these scholars and saints are not proud in their dress or conduct; they pray much, fast much, preach and study much; they also say mass, go meekly with bowed head, and shun costly clothes. They think there are no greater foes to pride, error and hypocrisy, nor any better friends of truth and of God, than they themselves. How else could they bring so great harm upon the truth if they were not such holy, pious and learned folk? Their doings make a brave outward show and impress the common people. O they have good hearts and mean well, they call upon the good God, and pity the poor Jesus, who was so unrighteous and proud, and not so pious as they. He says of them, in Matthew xi, "Divine wisdom is justified by her children"—that is, "They are more righteous and wise than I, Who am divine Wisdom Itself; whatever I do is wrong, and I am schoolmastered by them." Matt. 11:19

These men are the most venomous and pernicious folk on earth, their hearts abysses of satanic pride. There is no helping them; they will not heed our counsel. It does not concern them; they leave that to poor sinners, for whom such teaching is necessary, but not for them. John calls them, "a generation of vipers," in Luke iii, and so does Christ. Luke 3:7

[1] Cf. p. 178.

Matt. 23:23 These are the right guilty ones,[1] who do not fear God, and are fit only that God should scatter them with their pride, because none persecute the right and wisdom more than they,—yet for the sake of God and of righteousness, as we have said. Hence they must needs be first and foremost among the three enemies of God on this side.[2] For the rich are the least His enemies; the mighty are much more hostile; but these wiseacres are the worst of all, because of their influence on others. The rich destroy the truth among themselves; the mighty drive it away from others; but these wise ones utterly extinguish the truth itself, and replace it with other things, the imagination of their own heart, so that the truth cannot come again into its own. As much as the truth itself is better than the men among whom it dwells, so much worse are the wise than the mighty and the rich. O God is their special enemy, as they well deserve.

THE THIRD WORK: PUTTING DOWN THE MIGHTY

"He hath Put Down the Mighty from their Seats"

This work and those that follow are easily understood from the two foregoing works. For, just as God scatters the wise and prudent in their own thoughts and imaginations, on which they depend, venting their pride on them that fear God, who must needs be in the wrong and see their right and their opinion rejected (which happens chiefly for the sake of God's Word); even so He destroys and puts down the mighty and the great with their strength and authority, on which they depend, venting their pride on their inferiors, the godly and weak, who must needs suffer injury, pain, death and all manner of evil at their hands. And just as He comforts those who must suffer wrong and

[1] Die rechtschuldigen. Seemingly a play on the word. They insist on their right, and they are indeed right, but right guilty.

[2] See above, p. 168.

shame for the right, truth and word, even so He comforts those who must suffer injury and evil. And as much as He comforts the latter, so much does He terrify the former.

But this, too, must all be known and waited for in faith. For He does not destroy the mighty as suddenly as they deserve, but lets them go for a season, until their might has reached its highest point. When it has done this, God does not support it, neither can it support itself; it breaks down of its own weight without any crash or sound, and the oppressed are raised up, also without any sound, for God's strength is in them, and it alone remains when the strength of the mighty has fallen.

Observe, however, that Mary does not say He breaks the seats, but He casts the mighty from their seats. Nor does she say He leaves those of low degree in their low degree, but He exalts them. For while the earth remaineth, authority, rule, power and seats must needs remain. But God will not long suffer men to abuse them and turn them against Him, inflict injustice and violence on the godly, and take pleasure therein, boast of them and fail to use them in the fear of God, to His praise and in defence of righteousness. We see in all histories and in experience that He puts down one kingdom and exalts another, lifts up one principality and casts down another, increases one people and destroys another; as He did with Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, though they thought they should sit in their seats forever. Nor does He destroy reason, wisdom and right; for if the world is to go on, these things must remain. But He does destroy pride and the proud, who use these things for selfish ends, take pleasure therein, do not fear God, but persecute the godly and the divine right by means of them, and thus abuse the fair gifts of God and turn them against Him.

Now, in things divine, the wiseacres and proud sages are wont to make common cause with the mighty and to persuade them to take sides against the truth; as it is written

Ps. 2:2 in Psalm ii, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed." For truth and right must ever be assailed by the wise, the mighty, and the rich, that is, by the world with its greatest and best ability. Hence the Holy Spirit comforts truth and right by the mouth of this Mother and bids them not to be deceived nor afraid. Let them be wise, mighty, rich: it will not be for long. For if the saints and scholars, together with the mighty lords and the rich, were not against but for the right and the truth, what would become of the wrong? Who would there be to suffer evil? But this must never come to pass. The learned, saintly, mighty, great and rich, and the best that the world has, must fight against God and the right, and be the devil's
Hab. 1:16 own. As it is said in Habakkuk: "His meat is dainty and choice"—that is to say, the evil spirit has a most delicate palate and is fond of feasting on the very best, daintiest and choicest morsels, as a bear on honey. Hence the learned and saintly hypocrites, the great lords and the rich, are the devil's own titbits. On the other hand, those whom the world rejects, the poor, lowly, simplehearted and despised,
1 Cor. 1:28 God hath chosen, as Paul says in I Corinthians i, and causes the best part of mankind to bring suffering upon the lowest part, in order that men may know that our salvation consists not in man's power and works, but in God's alone, as
1 Cor. 3:7 St. Paul also says. Hence there is much truth in these sayings, "The more men know, the worse they grow";[1]
Luke 16:19 ff. "A prince, a rare bird in heaven";[2] "Rich here, poor yonder." For the learned will not put by the pride of their hearts, nor the mighty their oppression, nor the rich their pleasures. Thus wags the world.

[1] Die Gelehrten, die Verkehrten.
[2] Cf. Vol. II, p. 163.

THE FOURTH WORK: EXALTING THE LOWLY

"And Exalted them of Low Degree"

Those of low degree are here not the humble, but all such as are contemptible and altogether nothing in the eyes of the world. It is the same expression Mary applied to herself above—"He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden." Nevertheless, those who are willing to be nothing and lowly of heart, and do not strive to be great, are truly humble. Now, when He exalts them, it does not mean that He will put them in the seats of those He has cast out; any more than when He shows mercy to them that fear Him, He puts them in the place of the learned, that is, the proud. He grants them rather to be exalted spiritually and in God, and to be judges over seats and power and all might, both here and in heaven; for they have more knowledge than all the learned and mighty. How this is done was said above[1] under the first work and need not be repeated. All this is said for the comfort of the suffering and for the terror of the tyrants, if we but had faith enough to believe it true.

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH WORKS

"He hath Filled the Hungry with Good Things: and the Rich He hath Sent empty away"

We said above that by those of low degree are meant not those who are despised and nothing in appearance, but those who are willing to be in such a state, especially if they have been forced into it for the sake of God's Word or the right. Even so, by the hungry are not meant those who have little or nothing to eat, but those who gladly suffer want, especially if they are forcibly compelled by

[1] See pp. 169 ff.

others to do so for God's sake or the truth. Who is lowlier, more despised and needier than the devil and the damned, or than men who are tortured, starved, or slain on account of their evil deeds, or all who are lowly and in want against their will? Yet that does not help them, but only adds to their misery. Of them the Mother of God does not speak, but of those who are one with God and God with them, and who believe and trust in Him.

On the other hand, what hindrance was their riches to the holy fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? What hindrance was his royal throne to David, or his authority in Babylon to Daniel? or their high station or great riches to those who had them or who have them to-day, provided they do not set their hearts on them nor seek their own in them? Solomon says, in Proverbs xvi, "The Lord weigheth the spirits"—that is, He judgeth not according to the outward appearance, whether one be rich or poor, high or low, but according to the spirit, and how it behaves itself within. There must needs be such differences and distinctions of persons and stations in our life here on earth, yet the heart should neither cling to them nor fly from them—not cling to the high and rich, nor fly from the poor and lowly. Thus it is also said in Psalm vii, "God trieth the hearts and reins"—therefore He is a "just judge." But men judge according to the outward appearance; therefore they often err.

Prov. 16:2

Ps. 7:9, 11

These works are done in secret, like those mentioned above,[1] so that no one is aware of them until they have come to an end. A rich man is not aware how really empty and wretched he is until he comes to die or otherwise suffers loss. Then only does he see how all his goods were altogether nothing, as it is said in Psalm lxxvi, "They have slept their sleep (that is, died); and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hand." On the other hand, the hungry and thirsty know not how filled with good things they are until they come to the end. Then they find the

Ps. 76:5 (Vulgate)

[1] See p. 178.

words of Christ true, in Luke vi, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst; for they shall be filled," and the comfortable promise of the Mother of God here, "He hath filled the hungry with good things." It is utterly impossible for God to let any one who trusts in Him die of starvation; all angels must sooner come and feed him. Elijah was fed by ravens, and lived for many days on a handful of meal, he and the widow of Zarephath. God cannot forsake those who trust in Him. Hence David says, in Psalm xxxvii, "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Now, he is righteous that trusts in God. Again, in Psalm xxxiv, "The rich have wanted, and have suffered hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good." And St. Anna, the mother of Samuel, says in I Samuel ii, "They that were full before have hired out themselves for bread: and the hungry are filled."

Luke 6:21
1 Kings 17:6, 15
Ps. 37:25
Ps. 34:10 (Vulgate)
1 Sam. 2:5

But our wretched unbelief always hinders God from working such works in us, and ourselves from experiencing and knowing them. We desire to be filled and have all things aplenty before hunger and want arrive. We lay up provision against future hunger and need, so that we no longer have need of God and His works. What sort of faith is that which trusts in God, when all the while you feel and know that you have goods laid up whereby you are able to help yourself? It is because of our unbelief that we see God's Word, the truth, and the right defeated, and wrong triumph, and yet remain silent, do not rebuke, speak out, nor prevent it, but let things go as they will. Why? We are afraid that we too might be attacked and made poor, and might then perish of hunger and be forever laid low. That is to esteem temporal goods more than God, and to put them in God's place as an idol. If we do this, we do not deserve to hear nor to understand this comfortable promise of God,—that He exalts the lowly, puts down the mighty, fills the poor, and empties the rich. We do not deserve ever to come to the knowledge of His works, with-

out which there is no salvation. We must needs therefore
Ps. 28:5 be damned forever, as Psalm xxviii says, "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up." And that justly; because they do not believe His promises, but count Him a fickle, lying God. They dare not make a venture nor launch out on the strength of His words, so little do they esteem His truth. It is indeed necessary that we make a trial, and venture out on His words; for Mary does not say that He hath filled the full, and exalted them of high degree, but, "He hath filled the hungry, and exalted them of low degree."

You must needs feel the pinch of poverty in the midst of your hunger, and learn by experience what hunger and poverty are, with no provision on hand and no help in yourself or any other man, but in God only; so that the work may be God's alone, and impossible to be done by any other. You must not only think and speak of a low estate, but actually come to be in a low estate, and caught in it, without any human aid, so that God alone may do the work. Or, if it should not come to such a pass, you must at least desire it and not shrink from it. We are Christians and have the Gospel, which neither the devil nor men can abide, in order that we may come into poverty and lowliness, and God may thereby have His work in us. Think but for yourself and you will see that if God were to fill you before you were hungry or to exalt you before you were brought low, He must needs sink to the level of a wizard or conjuror; He would be unable to do what He promises, and all His works would be a mere jest, whereas
Ps. 111:7 it is written in Psalm cxi, "His works are verity and truth." And even if He were to perform His works as soon as you felt the first pinch of want or lowliness, or to help you in some slight need, such works would be altogether unworthy of His divine power and majesty; for Psalm cxi says of them,
Ps. 111:2 (Vulgate) "Great are the works of the Lord: sought out according to all his wills."

Let us assume the reverse case. If He were to put down the rich and them of high degree before they became either rich or high, how would He go about it? They must first have risen to so high a place and come into such great riches that they themselves and everyone else supposed—nay, that it was actually the case—none could put them down, none could stop them, and that they were sure of themselves and said what Isaiah writes of them and of Babylon, Isaiah xlvii: "Hear now this, thou that art delicate, and dwellest confidently, and sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children (that is, of power and assistance). But these two things shall come to thee in one day." Then only is God able to work His works in them. Thus He suffered Pharaoh to lift himself up against the children of Israel and to oppress them, as He Himself says of him in Exodus ix: "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." Of such instances the Bible is full, whereby it teaches naught but God's work and word, and rejects the work and word of men.

Isa. 47:8f.

Ex. 9:16

Behold, how strong a comfort it is, that not man but God gives to the hungry, and that He not only gives them this or that, but fills and fully satisfies them. Mary says, moreover, "with good things." That is to say, this fulness is to be harmless, wholesome and saving, benefiting both body, soul, and all their powers. But it also shows that, before being filled, the hungry are lacking in all good things and filled with all want. For, as we said above,[1] riches here include all manner of temporal goods for the supply of bodily needs, whereby the soul also is rejoiced. Even so, hunger here signifies the want not only of food but of all temporal goods. For a man can do without everything else but food, so that almost all goods exist for the sake of furnishing him with food, without which no man can live, even though he might be able to live without clothing,

[1] See p. 186.

house, money, property and fellow-men. The Scripture, therefore, here designates temporal goods according to that part of them whose need and use are most essential, and which we can least of all do without. Thus it also calls misers and men covetous of temporal goods, "servants of their own belly," and Paul calls their belly their god.

Rom. 16:18
Phil. 3:19

How could one be more strongly and comfortably moved to willing endurance of hunger and poverty, than by these fine words of the Mother of God,—that God will fill all the hungry with good things? Whoever is not moved by these words and such glory and praise of poverty, is of a certainty without faith and trust, a very heathen. On the other hand, how could one bring a more damning accusation against riches or more grievously terrify the rich, than by saying that God sends them empty away? O how great and overflowing are both God's filling and God's sending away! How utterly vain is here the help or counsel of any creature! A man is frightened when he hears that his father has disowned him or that he has fallen into disfavor with his lord. Yet we rich men and of high degree are not frightened when we hear that God disowns us, nay, not only disowns us, but threatens to break, humble, and send us empty away! It is a joy, on the other hand, when one's father is good and one's lord gracious, and many a one sets such great store by these things as to give up life and property for them. We have here such a promise of God and such strong comfort—yet we can neither use nor enjoy them, neither thank Him for them nor rejoice therein! O wretched unbelief! hard and firm as stock and stone, not to feel such great things. Let this suffice concerning the six works of God.

"He hath Holpen His Servant Israel: In Remembrance of His Mercy"

After enumerating the works of God in her and in all men, Mary returns to the beginning and to the chief thing.

She concludes the Magnificat by mentioning the very greatest of all God's works—the Incarnation of the Son of God. She freely acknowledges herself handmaiden and servant to all the world, by confessing that this work which was performed in her was not done for her sake alone, but for the sake of all Israel. But she divides Israel into two parts, and refers only to that part that is God's servant.

Now no one is God's servant save he that lets Him be his God and perform His works in him, of which we spoke above.[1] Alas! the word "service of God" has nowadays taken on so strange a meaning and usage that whoever hears it thinks not of these works of God, but rather of the ringing of bells, the wood and stone of churches, the incense-pot, the flicker of candles, the mumbling in the churches, the gold, silver and precious stones in the vestments of choir-boys and celebrants, of chalices and monstrances, of organs and images, processions and churchgoing, and, most of all, the babbling of lips and the rattling of rosaries. This, alas! is what the service of God means now. Of such service God knows nothing at all, while we know nothing but this. We chant the Magnificat daily, to a special tone and with gorgeous pomp,[2] and yet the oftener we sing it the more we silence its true music and meaning. Yet the text stands firm. Unless we learn and experience these works of God, there will be no service of God, no Israel, no grace, no mercy, no God; though we kill ourselves with singing and ringing in the churches, and drag into them all the goods in all the world. God has not commanded any of these things; hence there can be no doubt that He takes no pleasure therein.

Now the Israel that is God's servant, him the Incarnation of Christ benefits. That is His own beloved people, for whose sake He also became man, to redeem them from the power of the devil, of sin, death and hell, and to lead them to righteousness, eternal life and salvation. That is the help of which Mary sings. As Paul says, in Titus ii, Titus 2:14

[1] See p. 137. [2] Cf. above, p. 138.

"Christ gave himself for us, that he might purify unto
1 Pet. 2:9 himself a peculiar people"; and St. Peter, in I Peter ii, "Ye are a holy nation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood," etc.

These are the riches of the boundless mercy of God, which we have received by no merit, but by pure grace. Therefore she sings, "He hath remembered His mercy." She does not say, He hath remembered our merit and worthiness. We were in need, to be sure, but altogether unworthy. Herein consists His praise and glory, while our boasting and presumption must hold their peace. There was nothing for Him to regard that could move Him save His mercy, and this name He desired to make known.

But why does she say, "He remembered" rather than "He regarded"? Because He had promised this mercy, as the following verse shows. Now He had waited a long time before showing it, until it seemed as though He had forgotten—even as all His works seem as though He was forgetting us—but when He came, it was seen that He had not forgotten, but had continually had in mind to fulfil His promise.

It is true that the word Israel means the Jews alone, and not us Gentiles. But because they would not have Him, He yet chose certain out of their number, and thereby satisfied the name Israel and made of it henceforth a spiritual Israel. This was shown in Genesis xxxii, when the
Gen. 32:24 ff. holy patriarch Jacob wrestled with the angel, who strained the hollow of his thigh out of joint, to show that his children should henceforth not boast of their fleshly birth, as the Jews do. Wherefore he also received a new name, that he should henceforth be called Israel, as a patriarch who was not only Jacob, the father of fleshly children, but Israel, the father of spiritual children. With this the word Israel agrees, for it means a prince with God. That is a most high and holy name and contains in itself the great miracle that, by the grace of God, a man prevailed as it were with God, so that God does what man desires. We see the same

thing in the case of the Christian Church. Through Christ she is joined to God as a bride to her bridegroom, so that the bride has a right to and power over her Bridegroom's body and all His possessions; all of which comes to pass through faith. By faith man does what God wills; God in turn does what man wills. Thus Israel means a godlike, God-conquering man, who is a lord in God, with God, and through God, able to do all things.

That is the meaning of Israel. For S a a r means a lord, a prince; E l means God. Put them together, and they become I s r a e l, after the Hebrew fashion. Such an Israel God would have. Therefore, when Jacob had wrestled with the angel and prevailed, He said to him, "Thy name shall be called Israel; for since thou hast power with God, thou shalt also have power with men." There would be much more to say on this subject, for Israel is a strange and profound mystery. Gen. 32:28

"As He Spake to our Fathers: To Abraham, and to his Seed forever"

Here all merit and presumption are brought low, and God's grace and mercy alone exalted. For God hath not holpen Israel on account of their merits, but on account of His own promise. In pure grace He made the promise, in pure grace He also fulfilled it. Wherefore St. Paul says in Galatians iii that God gave the promise to Abraham four hundred years before He gave the law to Moses, that no one might glory, saying he had merited and obtained such grace and promise through the law or the works of the law. This same promise the Mother of God here lauds and exalts above all else, ascribing this work of the Incarnation of God solely to the undeserved promise of divine grace, made to Abraham. Gal. 3:17f.

The promise of God to Abraham is recorded especially in Genesis xii and xxii, and is referred to, besides, in many other places. It runs thus: "By myself have I sworn: Gen. 12:3 Gen. 22:18

in thy seed shall all families or nations of the earth be blessed." These words are highly esteemed by St. Paul and by all the prophets, and well might they be. For in these words Abraham and all his descendants were preserved and saved, and in them we too must all be saved; for Christ is contained and promised therein as the Saviour of the whole world. This is Abraham's bosom[1] wherein were kept all who were saved before Christ's birth; without these words no one was saved, even though he had performed all good works. Let us examine them more fully.

Luke 16:22

In the first place, it follows from these words of God that without Christ all the world is in sin and under condemnation, and is accursed with all its doing and knowing. For if He says that not some but all nations shall be blessed in Abraham's seed, then without Abraham's seed no nation shall be blessed. What need was there for God to promise, so solemnly and with so mighty an oath, that He would bless them, if they were already blessed and not rather cursed? From this saying the prophets drew many inferences; namely, that all men are evil, liars all, false and blind, in short, without God, so that in the scriptural usage to be called a man is no great honor, since in God's sight the name of man is no better than the name of liar or faithless in the eyes of the world. So completely is man corrupted through Adam's fall that the curse is innate with him and become, as it were, his nature and being.[2]

It follows, in the second place, that this Seed of Abraham could not be born in the common course of nature, of a man and a woman; for such a birth is cursed and results in naught but accursed seed, as we have just said. Now, if all the world was to be redeemed from the curse by this Seed of Abraham and thereby blessed, as the word and oath of God declare, the Seed itself must first be blessed and

---

[1] Cf. Vol. I, p. 298; II, p. 198.

[2] Natur und Wesen. Cf. Köstlin's discussion of Luther's doctrine of original sin. Luthers Theologie, ii, 369 ff. (Engl. Trans., ii, 352 ff.).

neither touched nor tainted by that curse, but be pure blessing, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

Again, if God, Who cannot lie, declared with an oath that it should be Abraham's natural seed, that is, a natural and genuine child, born of his flesh and blood, then this Seed must needs be a true, natural man, of the flesh and blood of Abraham. Here then we have a contradiction—the natural flesh and blood of Abraham, and yet not born in the course of nature, of man and wife. Therefore He uses the word "thy seed," not "thy child," to make it very clear and certain that it should be his natural flesh and blood, such as seed is. For a child need not be one's natural child, as every one knows.[1] Now who will find the means to establish God's word and oath, wherein such contradictory things lie side by side?

God Himself has done this thing. He is able to keep what He has promised, even though no one may understand it before it come to pass; for His word and work do not demand the proof of reason, but a free and pure faith. Behold, how He combined the two. He raises up seed unto Abraham, the natural son of one of his daughters, a pure virgin, Mary, through the Holy Spirit, and without her knowing a man. Here there was no natural conception with its curse, nor could it touch this seed; and yet it is the natural seed of Abraham, as truly as any of the other children of Abraham. That is the blessed Seed of Abraham, in Whom all the world is set free from its curse. For whoever believes in this Seed, calls upon Him, confesses Him, and abides in Him, to him all his curse is forgiven and all blessing given, as the word and oath of God declare—"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That is to say, whatever is to be blessed must and shall be blessed through this Seed, and in no other way. This is Abraham's Seed, begotten by none of his sons, as the Jews always confidently expected, but born of this one daughter of his, Mary, alone.

[1] It may be an adopted child.

That is what the tender Mother of this Seed means here by saying, "He hath holpen His servant Israel, as He promised to Abraham and to all his seed." She found the promise fulfilled in herself; hence she says, "It is now fulfilled; He hath brought help, and kept His word, solely in remembrance of His mercy." Here we have the foundation of the Gospel, and see why all its teaching and preaching drive men to faith in Christ and into Abraham's bosom. For where there is not this faith no other way can be devised nor help given whereby to lay hold on this blessed Seed. And, indeed, the whole Bible hangs on this oath of God, for in the Bible everything has to do with Christ.

Furthermore, we see that all the fathers in the Old Testament, together with all the holy prophets, had the same faith and Gospel as we have, as St. Paul says in I Corinthians x; for they all remained with a strong faith in this oath of God and in Abraham's bosom and were preserved therein. The sole difference is, they believed in the coming and promised Seed; we believe in the Seed that is come and has been given. But it is all the one truth of the promise, and hence also one faith, one Spirit, one Christ, one Lord, now as then, and forever, as Paul says in Hebrews xiii.

1 Cor. 10:1 ff.

Eph. 4:5

Heb. 13:8

But the subsequent giving of the law to the Jews is not on a par with this promise. The law was given in order that by its light they might the better come to know their cursed state and the more fervently and heartily desire the promised Seed; wherein they had an advantage over all the heathen world. But they turned this advantage into a disadvantage; they undertook to keep the law by their own strength, and failed to learn from it their needy and cursed state. They thus shut the door upon themselves, so that the Seed was compelled to pass them by. They still continue in this state, but God grant not for long. Amen.

This was the cause of the quarrel all the prophets had with them. For the prophets well understood the purpose of the law, namely, that men should thereby know their

accursed nature and learn to call upon Christ.[1] Hence they condemned all the good works and everything in the life of the Jews that did not agree with this purpose. Wherefore the Jews waxed wroth with them and put them to death, as men who condemned the service of God, good works, and godly living; even as the hypocrites and graceless saints ever do, of which we might say a great deal.

When Mary says, "His seed forever," we are to understand "forever" to mean that such grace is to continue to Abraham's seed (that is, the Jews) from that time forth, throughout all time, down to the last day. Although the vast majority of them are hardened, yet there are always some, however few, that are converted to Christ and believe in Him. For this promise of God does not lie—that the promise was made to Abraham and to his seed, not for one year or for a thousand years, but in secula, that is, from one generation to another, without end. We ought, therefore, not to treat the Jews in so unkindly a spirit, for there are future Christians among them, and they are turning every day. Moreover, they alone, and not we Gentiles, have this promise, that there shall always be Christians among Abraham's seed, who acknowledge the blessed Seed, who knows how or when? As for our cause, it rests upon pure grace, without a promise of God. If we lived Christian lives, and led them with kindness to Christ, there would be the proper response. Who would desire to become a Christian, when he sees Christians dealing with men in so unchristian a spirit? Not so, my dear Christians. Tell them the truth in all kindness; if they will not receive it, let them go.[2] How many Christians are there who despise Christ, do not hear His word, and are worse than Jews or heathen! Yet we leave them in peace, and even fall down at their feet and wellnigh adore them as

---

[1] Christum lernen rufen; literally, to call Christ, and thus hasten His coming.

[2] Cf. R. Lewin, Luthers Stellung zu den Juden (Berlin, 1911), p. 22 f.

gods. Let this suffice for the present. We pray God to give us a right understanding of this Magnificat, an understanding that consists not merely in brilliant words, but in glowing life in body and soul. May Christ grant us this through the intercession and for the sake of His dear Mother Mary.[1] Amen.

EPILOGUE

In conclusion I come once more to your Grace, craving pardon for my temerity. I know full well that your Grace's youth is amply supplied, each day, with wholesome instruction and admonition. Yet I cannot neglect my duty as a loyal subject, nor keep my conscience from dwelling on and being concerned for your Grace. It is the hope of us all that God may by His salutary grace so direct the future that the rule of Saxony shall come into your Grace's hands, which will be a great and precious thing if it turn out well, but a perilous and wretched if it turn out ill. We must in all things hope and pray for the best, but none the less fear and be prepared for the worst.

Your Grace should reflect that in all the Scriptures God suffered not any heathen king or prince throughout the length and breadth of the world to be praised, but, contrariwise, to be punished; which is a mighty and terrible example to all rulers. Moreover, even in Israel, His chosen people, He found never a king worthy of praise and not rather of punishment. Above all, in the kingdom of Juda, the chief portion of the whole race of mankind, exalted by God and beloved of Him above all others, there were few, not above six, kings found worthy of praise. And the very best of kings, His own beloved David, who had no peer among temporal rulers, before, beside or after him, filled as he was with the fear and the wisdom of God, and directing his whole rule not after his own reason but according to God's command alone, nevertheless stumbled more than once. Where-

[1] See Introduction, p. 120.

fore, the Scripture, unable to blame his reign, and yet finding it necessary to narrate the calamity that befell the people on his account, put the blame not on David but on the people, saying God's anger was kindled against them so that He suffered the saintly David to be moved by the devil to number the people, on account of which seventy thousand of them were destroyed by pestilence. 2 Sam. 24:1 ff.

All these things were appointed by God in order to terrify those in authority, to keep them in fear, and to admonish them of their peril. For great possessions, glory, power and favor, as well as the flatterers no lord may be without, surround and lay siege to the heart of a prince, moving it to pride, to forgetfulness of God and neglect of the people and the common weal, to sensuality, blasphemy, arrogance and idleness, in short, to every sort of vice and evil. Indeed, there is no castle or city that is so heavily besieged and assaulted. Unless, therefore, one fortify oneself by means of such examples, and take the fear of God for his portcullis and rampart, how should he endure? For, unless a lord and ruler loves his subjects, and has for his chief concern not how to live at ease, but how to uplift and improve his people, his case is hopeless; he rules but to his soul's perdition. Nor will it avail him to make amends by the foundation of great anniversaries,[1] monasteries, altars, and what not. God will require of him an account of his office and station, and will not be satisfied with aught else.

Therefore, my gracious Lord and Prince, I commend the Magnificat to your Grace, particularly the fifth and sixth verses, in which its chief content is gathered up. I beseech and exhort your Grace in all your life to fear nothing on earth, nay, not even hell itself, so much as that which the Mother of God there calls, m e n s c o r d i s s u i. That is the greatest, closest, mightiest, and most destructive foe of all mankind, and especially of rulers. Its name is reason, good sense or opinion, and from it all counsels and all rule must be derived. Your Grace will never be secure from it

[1] Cf. Vol. II, p. 194.

unless you continually keep it under suspicion and follow it only in the fear of God. I do not mean your Grace's counsels only, but those of all your counselors as well. None should be despised, none trusted. How is this to be done? Why, your Grace should not leave prayer to the cowls or to the chalices,[1] as it is now the wretched custom to put one's trust in other men's prayers, without praying oneself; but your Grace should pluck up courage and be of good cheer, put by your timidity, and yourself converse with God in your heart or in secret, boldly casting down the keys[2] at His feet, and pleading His own institution with Him. After this fashion:

"Behold, O God my Father, it is Thy doing and appointment that I was born and created in this estate, to be a ruler. This none can deny, and Thou Thyself knowest it to be true. Whether worthy or unworthy, I yet am what Thou and everyone sees. Grant, therefore, my Lord and Father, that I may rule over Thy people to Thy praise and their profit. Let me not follow my own reason, but be Thou my reason," and so on. In this spirit, then, let things go as they will, in God's name.

1 Kings 3:5–14

How well such a prayer and such a spirit please God, He Himself shows in the case of Solomon, who also prayed such a prayer, which I have translated and hereunto appended.[3] May it serve your Grace as a pattern at the close of this preachment, and awaken in you a comfortable confidence in God's grace; so that both the fear and the mercy of God may be together, as the fifth verse sings.

Herewith I commend myself to your Grace, and your Grace to God. May He grant you a blessed reign. Amen.

---

[1] Monks and priests.

[2] The keys of office (so the note in the Berlin Ed.), or the keys to the house of his life, i. e., making full surrender (so Clemen).

[3] See Introduction, p. 121.

AN EARNEST EXHORTATION FOR ALL CHRISTIANS, WARNING THEM AGAINST INSURRECTION AND REBELLION

1522

(201)

INTRODUCTION

In July, 1520, some Wittenberg students created a disturbance in that city. People feared dangerous tumults, and it was even said that the students had threatened to burn the town. Luther afterwards recognized that these were only boyish pranks, but at the time he felt impelled to preach[1] against tumult and disturbance.

It may be that the recollection of these pranks kept Luther from alluding directly in the following treatise to the disturbances in Wittenberg on December 3, 1521. For it seems impossible not to believe that rumors of these disturbances reached and troubled him on his way from the Wartburg to Wittenberg,[2] and occasioned the writing of the treatise. In the three days he spent in Wittenberg, however, he found nothing to displease him.[3] But just as he had been impelled to preach in 1520, so he was now impelled to write against the temptation to use violence in the assertion of the truth. The rumors had merely served to force upon his attention the extent to which the temptation had appealed to the people. He himself had met it a long time before.

In 1520 Ulrich von Hutten and Franz von Sickingen had offered him their support;[4] Silvester von Schaumburg had not only offered him a safe retreat, but expressed the hope that he could rally a hundred of the nobility to his defence.[5]

Luther had himself considered the possibility of an appeal to force when in June, 1520, he wrote, "If we punish robbers with the sword and heretics with fire, why do we not assail these cardinals, these popes and the entire rout of the Romanish Sodom which is laying waste the Church of God without end, with all the weapons we have, and wash our hands in their blood, that we may save ourselves and all who belong to us from the most disastrous general conflagration."[6]

---

[1] July 15, 1520. See letters to Spalatin, July 14 and 17, 1520; SMITH, I, Nos. 277 and 278; DE WETTE, I, 467, 468; ENDERS, II, 431, 441, and 440, note 2.

[2] Letter to Spalatin, ENDERS, III, 253, "Although on the way I was troubled by a repeated rumor concerning the impatience of some of our party, so that I determined to publish a public exhortation as soon as I shall have returned to my desert."

[3] Letter to Spalatin, ENDERS, III, 253, "Everything I see and hear pleases me mightily."

[4] Letters of Hutten to Melanchthon, January 20 and February 28, 1520 (SMITH, I, Nos. 218, 231); to Luther himself, June 4, 1520 (ENDERS, II, 408 ff.; excerpts in SMITH, Life and Letters, p. 73 f

[5] Letter to Luther, June 11, 1520 (SMITH, I, No. 269).

[6] KÖSTLIN, I, 324.

But in January, 1521, he wrote to Spalatin, "You see what Hutten wants. I would not have the Gospel defended by violence and murder. In that sense I wrote to him. By the Word the world was conquered; by the Word the Church was preserved; by the Word she will be restored. Antichrist, as he began without violence, will be crushed without violence, by the Word."[1]

That disturbances would follow the preaching of the Gospel Luther could not prevent, nor did he close his eyes to the fact. Before the emperor at the Diet in Worms, he had said, "From all I have said it is clear, I believe, that I have thoroughly considered the dangers, hostilities and disturbances which grow out of my teaching, and of which I was earnestly reminded here yesterday. Yes, to me it is a precious thing to see that zeal and strife are stirred up concerning God's Word; for that is the course of the divine Word, as the Lord says, 'I am not come to send peace, but a sword; I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother.'"[2] He was only anxious that no disturbance should be raised by those who had learned from him.

In April, and again in June, 1521, attacks upon priests had been made by students at Erfurt.[3] On December 3 students at Wittenberg, presumably under the leadership of students from Erfurt, drove out of the parish church the priests who were about to say mass, and created other disturbances, so that on December 4 the Franciscans asked for a guard to protect their convent. Allusion to these disturbances in Wittenberg may be included in Luther's reference to 'the attack on the priests which the devil inspired at Erfurt.'[4] But the rumors he had heard weighed more with him than the actual disturbances; for they indicated the temper of the people, which is more dangerous than the actions of university students.

These rumors helped to give meaning to the words spoken in a popular pamphlet by a peasant. In the dialogue for the people, Karsthans,[5] the peasant, is made to say, "Dear Luther, write the divine truth in our language, in German, that we simple laymen also may read it. Only let it be true and well-grounded in Holy Scripture, as, in fact, nearly all of your writings are. And let us see to it that we save you from the power of the pope and the wearers of broad hats, unless our good fists, swords, armor and halberds and good firearms cannot help us. Germany has from of old, by

---

[1] January 16, 1521, quoted in SCHAFF, Church History, VI, p. 201 f.; DE WETTE, I, 543; ENDERS, III, 73.

[2] April 18, 1521. KÖSTLIN, I, 450.

[3] See below, p. 213.

[4] Das er tzu Erffurd mit den pfaffen anfieng. See below, p. 213.

[5] The popularity of which is indicated by the fact that its modern editor collates ten editions. See Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation, herausgegeben von Otto Clemen, Band IV, Heft 1, Karsthans, herausgegeben von Herbert Burckhardt.

God's grace, generally kept her prize. Our rough heads have had the least to fear, whether from Italians or from Frenchmen. What should happen to us now? Would the pope destroy by force him who teaches the Holy Gospel aright? Nothing of the kind. Where is my flail?"[1] Luther is made to answer, indeed, "No, dear friend, no one shall fight or kill on my account. If Christ had wished such a course, He might have called twelve legions of angels to help him. Nor did all the twelve apostles desire such a course, but patiently they suffered death and martyrdom for the sake of the truth. I go my way. You may read what both parties write, and accept what is most profitable. God be with you all!" But the fiery speech of Karsthans expressed the feeling of the people, which could not be restrained by such a simple statement.

Luther may have had in mind another Karsthans, less cautiously written, the one instance of a revolutionary Karsthans in those days. Between July and September, 1521, a continuation of the pamphlet appeared under the title Neukarsthans, the author of which was von Hutten. Here Franz von Sickingen pleads with Karsthans to commit to him the leadership of a peasants' revolt against the Romans. Karsthans is here stirred up by the picture drawn of the intolerable results of the rule of the priests, until he rages and demands to be released. He is convinced that if only the right leader could be found, the peasants would drive the priests out of the country. The original Karsthans,[2] after all, was not seriously revolutionary; but the Neukarsthans was. It is not at all impossible that the Neukarsthans was back of those rumors which disquieted Luther.

In any case, the whole question depended now upon the people. Luther had not accepted the help offered by Hutten, Sickingen and Schaumburg. The danger of an insurrection by the nobility was past. The students alone could accomplish little unless they could stir up the people. To the people Luther addresses himself. He discusses principles, and appeals to all Christians everywhere. That gives his treatise its permanent value.

Hardly more than a week after his return to the Wartburg, in the middle of December, 1521, he sent the manuscript of the Earnest Exhortation to Spalatin, with the request that it be printed as speedily as possible. It appears to have been published in January, 1522.

The German text is found in Clemen, II, 300–310; Weimar, VIII, 676–687; Erlangen, XXII, 44–59; Berlin, VII, 206–222; St. Louis, X, 360–373.

W. A. LAMBERT.

LEBANON, PA.

---

[1] Karsthans, Ed. Burckhardt, p. 95.
[2] BURCKHARDT, Karsthans, p. 47 f.

AN EARNEST EXHORTATION FOR ALL CHRISTIANS, WARNING THEM AGAINST INSURRECTION AND REBELLION

1522

GRACE and peace from God to all Christians who read or hear the contents of this pamphlet. Amen.

The Fear of an Insurrection

By the grace of God the blessed light of Christian truth, suppressed for a time by the pope and his followers, has again risen, since by their manifold and shameful practices all manner of wickedness and tyranny have been clearly revealed and brought to shame. Now it seems probable that there is danger of an insurrection, and that priests, monks, bishops and the entire spiritual estate may be murdered or driven into exile, unless they seriously and thoroughly reform themselves. For the common man has been brooding over the injury he has suffered in property, in body and in soul, and has become provoked. They have tried him too far and have most unscrupulously burdened him beyond measure. He is neither able nor willing to endure it longer, and would indeed have good reason to lay about him with flails and cudgels, as the peasants[1] are threatening to do.

Now, I am not at all displeased to hear that the clergy are brought to such a state of fear and anxiety. Perhaps they will come to their senses and moderate their mad tyranny. Would to God their terror and fear were even

[1] Karsthans, "the man with the hoe," hence the peasant. This is the title of a pamphlet published in 1521, widely circulated, known to Luther, and doubtless referred to here. The pamphlet has been republished in CLEMEN, Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation, Bd. IV. Heft I, Leipzig, 1910. See Introduction, p. 204.

greater. But I feel quite confident, and have no fear whatever that there will be an insurrection, at least one that would be general and affect all the clergy. And this confidence I feel because I neither can nor ought to doubt that God will watch over His Word and will see heaven and earth pass away long before a single jot or tittle of His Word shall fail, as He Himself says in Matthew v and xxiv. For this reason any man who can and will may threaten and frighten them, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled, which say of such evil doers, in Psalm xxxvi, "Their iniquity is made manifest that men may hate them." So also in Psalm xiv, "There have they trembled for fear, where there was no fear"; in Proverbs xxviii, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth"; in Leviticus xxvi, "The sound of a shaken leaf shall terrify them," and in Deuteronomy xxviii, "God will give thee a trembling heart, and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were evening! And at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!" According to the Scriptures such fear and anxiety come upon the enemies of God as the beginning of their destruction. Therefore it is right, and pleases me well, that this punishment is beginning to be felt by the papists who persecute and condemn the divine truth. They shall soon suffer more keenly.

Unfounded

Matt. 5:18; 24:35

Ps. 36:2

Ps. 14:5

Prov. 28:1

Lev. 26:36

Deut. 28:65–67

I will go farther. If I had ten bodies and could acquire so much favor with God that He would chasten them by the gentle means[1] of bodily death or insurrection, I would most gladly give them all to death in behalf of these poor men. Alas! no such mild chastisement awaits them. Already an unspeakable severity and anger without limit has begun to break upon them. The heaven is iron, the earth is brass. No prayers can save them now. Wrath, as Paul says of the Jews, is come upon

Deut. 28:23

1 Thess. 2:16

[1] Fuchsschwanz, the soft and bushy tail of the fox, to which Luther also compares death, above, p. 80. Tyndale in a similar connection uses the term "peacock's feather."

them to the uttermost. God's purposes demand far more than an insurrection. As a whole they are beyond the reach of help. Would God we might at least extricate some and save them from the horrible abyss that is waiting to swallow them up. The Scriptures have foretold for the pope and his followers an end far worse than bodily death
Dan. 8:25 and insurrection. Daniel viii says, "He shall be broken without hand," that is, not with the sword nor with bodily strength. And St Paul in II Thessalonians ii says of the
2 Thess. 2:8 pope, "Our Lord Jesus shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming." Artists also paint Christ seated on a rainbow with a sword and a twig proceeding out of His mouth,[1] a
Isa. 11:4; cf. Rev. 1:16 conception based on Isaiah xi, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." But the artists paint a twig in blossom, and that is a mistake. It should be a rod or staff, and both staff and sword should be on the same side, extend-
Ps. 10:15 ing only over the condemned.[2] Psalm x also says, "Break thou the arm of the wicked, and seek out his sin, and his wickedness shall not endure."

These texts teach us how both the pope and his anti-christian government[3] shall be destroyed. Through the word of Christ, which is the breath, staff and sword of His mouth, the pope's knavery, deceit, mischief, tyranny and seduction shall be revealed and laid open to the world's derision. For lying and seduction need only be revealed and recognized to be overcome. When once lying is recognized as such, it needs no second stroke; it falls of itself and disappears under a cloud of shame. That is the mean-
Ps. 10:15 ing of Psalm x, "Only seek out his sin, and his wickedness

[1] Such a representation of Christ is found in the old Wittenberg Church seal, in stone reliefs on the walls of the parish church and on the entrance to the cemetery. See Berlin Ed., VII, 208, and Weimar, VIII, 678.

[2] The artists evidently based their conception on Rev. 1:16. The "blossoming twig" is intended to be the stem of a lily, indicating the innocence and purity of the blessed. So Weimar Ed., and Berlin Ed., as above.

[3] Regiment, which refers to the persons through whom, as well as the power by which, he governs.

is at an end." It needs only to be sought out and recognized. Now, all that the pope is and has, his foundations, monasteries, universities, laws and doctrines, all are sheer lies, founded upon sheer lies. Only his hypocrisy has enabled him to deceive, seduce and oppress the world and to destroy men's bodies, property and souls. If once the truth is recognized and made known, pope, priests, monks and the whole papacy will end in shame and disgrace. For no man is so mad as to cling to, and not rather to hate, open lies and dishonesty. When the knavery of the pope has been thus exposed and Christ prevails by the breath of His mouth, so that men no longer respect but utterly despise both the pope and his lies, the last day will have begun, and Christ will by His coming completely destroy the pope, as Paul says. 2 Thess. 2:8

But here is the best point in the whole matter. The pope and his followers will be hardened and will not believe it at all, but laugh at it, that they may fulfil the word of Paul, cum dixerint pax,—"When they shall be secure and say, There is no need, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thess. 5:3 In order that the papists may by no means reform and look for mercy, they are not to believe this, but rather to say, The last day is yet far off, until in the twinkling of an eye, before they are aware of it, they lie tumbled in a heap deep down in hell-fire.

As I have said, these texts have made me certain that the papacy and the spiritual estate will not be destroyed by the hand of man, nor by insurrection. Their wickedness is so horrible that nothing but a direct manifestation of the wrath of God itself, without any intermediary whatever, will be punishment sufficient for them. And therefore I have never yet let men persuade me to oppose those who threaten to use hands and flails. I know quite well that they will get no chance to do so. They may, indeed, use violence against some, but there will be no general use made of violence. Priests have been murdered in earlier days, when men still feared their ban, and when the wrath

of God had not yet come upon them, more then perhaps than now; and no tumult or insurrection was made. But now that the wrath of God has come upon them, and men no longer fear them, let them be afraid without cause, just as they formerly made us afraid without cause by means of their counterfeit ban, and were delighted and proud because we were afraid of them.[1]

Although it will not come to violence, and there is therefore no need that I restrain men's hands, I must instruct their hearts a little. For the present I will pass by the temporal authorities and the nobility. The duties incident to the authority conferred upon them demand that they do something with their authority, each prince and noble within his own territories.[2] For what is done by constituted authority cannot be regarded as rebellion. But at present they are doing nothing at all, each hinders the other, and some even help Antichrist and stand up for him. God will find them out and reward them according to the use they have made of their authority and position, whether to the salvation or to the destruction of the bodies, property and souls of their subjects. But the mind of the common man we must calm, and tell him to give way not even to the passions and words which lead to insurrection, and to do nothing at all unless commanded to do so by his superiors or assured of the co-operation of the authorities.

This course should commend itself to him for the following reasons:

Insurrection Impossible

I. As has been said, there will be no real violence. All that men are saying[3] and thinking on the subject amounts to nothing more than wasted words and idle thoughts. For, as we heard above, God has reserved their punishment to Himself, and they do not at all deserve so light a punishment. Besides, we see how the princes and nobles disagree

---

[1] Cf. Vol. II, pp. 43 ff.

[2] Cf. the Open Letter to the Nobility, Vol. II, pp. 69 ff.; cf. p. 57.

[3] As, for example, in pamphlets. ALBRECHT, in Berlin Ed., VII, 311, refers to VOGT, Vorgeschichte des Bauernkriegs, Halle, 1887.

among themselves, and that they manifest no willingness whatever to improve matters. And all this is the Lord's doing, that He alone may punish them and pour out His wrath upon them. But that does not excuse the princes and nobles. They ought to do their part, oppose the evil with all the power of their sword, in the hope that they might turn aside and moderate at least some of the wrath of God, as Moses did according to Exodus xxxii. At his command three thousand men were slain by the people, that God's wrath might be turned away from the people. The Scriptures relate similar deeds also of Elijah and of Phinehas. I do not mean that the priests ought to be killed, for that is not necessary, but that whatever they do beyond and contrary to the Gospel should be forbidden by commands properly enforced. Words and edicts will more than suffice in dealing with them; there is no need of more material weapons.

Exod. 32:28

1 Kings 18:40 Num. 25:7 ff.

II. Even if the occurrence of an insurrection were possible, and God were willing to visit so gracious a punishment upon them, insurrection is an unprofitable method of procedure, and never results in the desired reformation. For insurrection is devoid of reason and generally hurts the innocent more than the guilty. Hence no insurrection is ever right, no matter how good the cause in whose interest it is made. The harm resulting from it always exceeds the amount of reformation accomplished, so that it fulfils the saying, "Things go from bad to worse." For this reason temporal powers are ordained and the sword given into their hands that they may punish the wicked and protect the godly, and that insurrection may not be necessary, as St. Paul says in Romans xiii, and also St. Peter in I Peter ii. But when Sir Mob[1] breaks loose he cannot tell the wicked from the godly nor keep them apart; he strikes at random, and then horrible injustice is inevitable.

Unprofitable

Rom. 13:1 ff. 1 Pet. 2:13 f.

Keep your eye fixed on the authorities therefore. As long as they do nothing and give no commands, do you

[1] Herr Omnes.

keep quiet your hand, your mouth and your heart, and assume no responsibility. But if you can prevail upon the authorities to do something and to give commands, you may do so. If they are unwilling it is your duty to be unwilling also. Any move you may make is wrong, and makes you much worse than those you oppose. My sympathies are and always will be with those against whom insurrection is made, however wrong the cause they stand for, and opposed to those who make insurrection, however much they may be in the right. For there can be no insurrection without the shedding of innocent blood and wrong done to the guiltless.

Forbidden

III. God has forbidden insurrection, in that He says through Moses, Quod justum est, juste exequaris,—"Thou shalt follow justly after that which is just," and "Vengeance is mine, I will repay"; upon which texts is based the true proverb, "He who strikes back is in the wrong," and that other, "No one can be his own judge." Now insurrection is nothing else than being one's own judge and avenger, and that God cannot endure. Hence the only possible result of insurrection is that matters become worse than they were, because insurrection is contrary to God and God will have nothing to do with it.

Deut. 16:20
Deut. 32:35
Rom. 12:19

Of the Devil

IV. In this particular case insurrection is most certainly a suggestion of the devil. For he sees the bright light of the Gospel in which his idols, the pope and the papists, stand exposed before all the world, and in no way can he put it out. The brilliant rays have so dazzled his eyes and blinded him that he can do nothing more than lie, blaspheme and suggest arrant nonsense, until he even forgets to assume the hypocritical appearance of respectability to which we were accustomed in the bulls and books of those shameless liars, the pope, Eck, Emser and the rest of them.[1] Now he wants to stir up an insurrection through those who glory in the Gospel, and hopes in this way to bring our teaching into contempt, as if the devil and not God were its author.

[1] See p. 219.

Some men are already making much of this interpretation in their preaching, as a result of the attack on the priests which the devil inspired at Erfurt.[1] But, if God wills, he shall not succeed. We must bear the contempt he brings upon us. But he shall have to bear something that will pay him amply for it. They who read and understand my teaching correctly will not make an insurrection. They have not so learned from me. But how can we prevent men from assuming our name when they make insurrection? How much that Christ has forbidden, how much that even destroys Christ, are the papists doing in the name of Christ? Are we to keep our company so pure that among us not even a St. Peter may stumble, although among the papists there are none but Judases and Judas-like deceit, and they are not willing to have their teaching ascribed to the devil? But, as I said, the devil tries in every way possible to find an excuse for slandering our teaching. If there were anything worse he could do, he would do it. But he is checkmated, and must take his punishment, if God wills, now that he has been reduced to such lame, worthless, rotten schemes. He will not and shall not succeed in stirring up an insurrection, although his heart is set upon it.

Men's Duty

Therefore I beseech all who would glory in the name of Christian to be guided by St. Paul's words in II Corinthians vi, that we may give our opponents no occasion to blame our teaching. For we see how apt the papists are to pay no attention to the beam in their own eyes, and to hunt and dig to find a tiny splinter in our eyes. We are not to reproach them with the fact that in them there is hardly any good thing. But if even one of us is not perfectly spiritual and quite an angel they claim that we are altogether in the wrong. Then they rejoice, and dance and sing as if they had gained a complete victory. Therefore we must guard against giving them any occasion to slander us, for they are exceeding full of slander. Not that we can

2 Cor. 6:3

Matt. 7:3

[1] In April and June, 1521. Weimar Ed. refers to KAMPSCHULTE, Die Universität Erfurt (Trier, 1860), II, 106 ff. See Introduction, p. 204.

Matt. 12:34 Tit. 1:11 1 Pet. 2:15 1 Pet. 3:16

help them, for they must slander and let their mouth speak out of the abundance of their heart, even if they must lie to do it, as they are doing now. But we must think of the Holy Gospel and keep it free from reproach, and stop their mouths, as St. Peter bids us do, that, so far as lies in us, they may not be able to speak any evil of us truthfully. For whatever evil they can say of us they immediately ascribe to our doctrine, and thus the holy Word of God must bear our shame, although we derive from it all the honor we have. But their doctrine they regard as above reproach, although it produces nothing but evil. So noble, loving and just a people are they!

To Confess Sins

2 Thess. 2:10 f.

But if you ask, What are we to do in case the authorities are unwilling to act? Are we to continue to put up with things as they are, and encourage them in their wickedness? I answer, You are to do nothing of the kind. There are three things you are to do. First, you are to recognize your own sin, because of which the strict justice of God has brought upon you this antichristian government, as St. Paul foretold in II Thessalonians ii, "God will send upon them false teaching and government, because they have not received the love of truth, that they might be saved." All that the pope and his followers have done to our possessions, to our bodies and our souls, is no more than we deserve. Therefore you must first confess your sin and put it from you, before you try to escape the punishment. Otherwise you will only run into greater condemnation, and the stone you throw upwards toward heaven[1] will fall on your own head.

To Pray

Ps. 10: 12 ff.

In the second place, you are to pray in all humility against the papal government, as Psalm x does and teaches us to do when it says, "Arise, Lord God, and lift up Thine hand, forget not Thy poor. Why does the wicked man blaspheme Thee, Lord God, and say, Thou wilt not require it? Thou seest it and considerest his labor and sorrow,

[1] Uber dich wirffist gen hymel, cast against those above you, and therefore aim in the direction of heaven and God.

that Thou mayest deliver them into Thy hands. To Thee is the poor man left; Thou wilt be a helper to the orphan. Break Thou the arm of the godless; seek out his wickedness, and his godlessness shall not be found."

In the third place, you are to make of your mouth such a mouth of the Spirit of Christ as St. Paul speaks of in the text quoted above, "Our Lord Jesus will slay him with the mouth of His Spirit."[1] This we will do if we boldly continue the work already begun, and by speaking and writing spread among the people the knowledge of the knavery and deceit of the pope and his papists, until he is exposed, known and brought into disrepute throughout the world. For we must slay him with words; the mouth of Christ must do it. That is the way he is torn out of men's hearts and his lies become known and despised. And when he is out of men's hearts, so that he has lost their confidence, he is already destroyed. This will do more good than a hundred insurrections. Our violence will do him no harm at all, but rather make him stronger, as many have experienced before now. But the light of truth hurts him; when we contrast him with Christ, and his teaching with the Gospel, that brings him low and utterly destroys him without any effort or exertion on our part. See what I have done. Have I not with words alone, without any use of the sword whatever, done more injury to the pope, bishops, priests and monks than all emperors, kings and princes with all their power ever did before? And why? Because Daniel viii says, "This king shall be broken without hand," and St. Paul says, "He shall be destroyed by the mouth of Christ." Now every man, whether it be I or another, who speaks the word of Christ, may boldly assert that his mouth is the mouth of Christ. I for my part am certain that the words I speak[2] are not mine, but Christ's. Then my mouth also must be His Whose words it speaks.

To Proclaim the Gospel
2 Thess. 2:8

Dan. 8:25
2 Thess. 2:8

[1] A mistake for "spirit of His mouth." The text is correctly quoted above, p. 208.

[2] Mein Wort, the message contained in the words. Luther does not claim for himself any form of inspiration, but maintains that he is declaring the truth of God.

The Spiritual Insurrection

Therefore you need not desire an armed insurrection. Christ has Himself already begun an insurrection with His mouth which will be more than the pope ean bear. Let us join ourselves to that, and go about our business. The work that is now being done in the world is not ours. Such a matter cannot be begun and carried on by any man. In what has already been done my approval and advice were not asked; the end also shall be attained without my help, and the gates of hell shall not prevent it. A far different man is making things move;[1] but Him the papists do not see, and therefore they lay the blame on us. But they shall see for themselves very soon. The devil has for a long time feared the approach of these years; he smelled the rat from afar. He even issued many prophecies against it, some of which point to me, so that I am often amazed at his marvelous subtilty. More than once he would have liked to kill me; now he would like to see an armed insurrection, which would bring this spiritual insurrection into bad repute and hinder it. But, if God wills, it will not and shall not help him at all. He must be destroyed "without hand" and "with the mouth alone"; nothing will prevent that.

Matt. 16:18

Do you, therefore, preach the holy Gospel, and help others to preach it; teach, speak, write and preach that the Church laws amount to nothing;[2] allow no one to enter the priesthood, the monastery or the convent, and encourage every one who has entered to leave it again; give no more money for bulls,[3] candles, bells, paintings[4] and churches, but tell men that a Christian life consists of faith and love. Let us do this for two years longer, and you shall see what will become of pope, bishops, cardinals, priests, monks, nuns, bells, towers, masses, vigils, gowns, cowls, tonsures, rules, statutes, and all the swarming ver-

[1] Eyn ander man ists der das redle treybt.

[2] That is, they have no divine authority, and observance of them is no help to salvation. The original is Menschengesetz.

[3] Privileges conferred by papal bulls.

[4] Paintings placed in churches in fulfilment of vows.

min[1] of the papal government. They shall all vanish like smoke. But if we do not thus teach and spread this truth among the people, so that their hearts will no longer cling to these things, the pope will abide in safety, though we should stir up a thousand insurrections against him. See what effect this one year of preaching and writing this truth has had; how the papists' cover has shrunk both in length and in breadth![2] The stationarii[3] complain that they are almost starving. What will the result be if this mouth of Christ shall consume[4] with His Spirit for two more years? This is what the devil would like to prevent by stirring up an armed insurrection. But let us be wise, thank God for His holy Word, and be bold with our mouths in the service of this blessed insurrection.

2 Thess. 2:8

The ignorance of the papists has been revealed. Their hypocrisy has been revealed. The wicked lies contained in their laws and monastic orders have been revealed. Their wicked and tyrannical use of the ban has been revealed. In short, everything with which they have until now bewitched, frightened and deceived the world has been uncovered. Men see that it was all a mere delusion.[5] They can no longer frighten men with anything except the little temporal power they have. But now that the tinsel has come off, and they must defend themselves by sheer force, it cannot continue long. And what escapes the mouth of Christ, His appearing shall destroy, as St. Paul says. Therefore let us keep boldly on, earnestly inculcate the word, and drive out the laws of men.[6] This is the way Christ is through us slaying the papacy. Already it sings, Eli, Eli; it is hard hit. Soon men will say, expiravit.[7]

The Papists are Judged

2 Thess. 2:8

Mark 15:34, 37

---

[1] Geschwurm und gewurm.

[2] So that they are exposed on all sides, and uncomfortable.

[3] See Vol. II, p. 135, n. 2.

[4] Dresschen wirt, shall thresh, possibly an allusion to Matthew 3:12.

[5] Gauckelwerck, like the robes of a juggler with their cheap tinsel and trimmings.

[6] See above, p. 216.

[7] The end of the papacy is compared with the death of Christ. Already mortally wounded, it cries out, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me"; soon it will "give up the ghost."

Moderation Demanded

But I must admonish those also who by their way of doing even this[1] cause a great falling away from the holy Gospel and bring it into evil repute. There are some who, as soon as they have read a page or two or have heard a sermon, go at it slap-dash, and do no more than overwhelm others with reproach and find fault with them and their practices as being unevangelical, without stopping to consider that many of them are honest and simple folk, who would soon learn the truth if it were told them. This also I have taught no one to do, and St. Paul has strictly forbidden it. Their only motive is the desire to tell some new thing and to be considered good Lutherans. They abuse the holy Gospel and make it serve their pride. In that way you will never bring the Gospel into the hearts of men. On the contrary, you will frighten them away, and upon you will be laid the awful responsibility of having driven them away from the truth. That is not the way to do, thou fool. Listen, and let me advise you.

Rom. 14: 1 ff; 15:1 1 Cor. 4:3 f. Acts 17:20

Not Lutherans but Christians

First of all, I ask that men make no reference to my name, and call themselves not Lutherans, but Christians. What is Luther? My doctrine, I am sure, is not mine, nor have I been crucified for any one. St Paul, in I Corinthians iii, would not allow Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian. How then should I, poor, foul carcase[2] that I am, come to have men give to the children of Christ a name derived from my worthless name? No, no, my dear friends; let us abolish all party names, and call ourselves Christians after Him Whose doctrine we have. The papists have a party name deservedly, because they are not content with the doctrine and the name of Christ, but want to be papist as well. Let them be papist then, since the pope is their master. I neither am nor want to be any man's master. Christ alone is our Master, and

John 7:16 1 Cor. 3:4 f.

Matt. 23:8

---

[1] Hie ynn dyszem treyben, that is, in inculcating the word and driving out the laws of men, das wort eyntreybenn, die menschen gesetz ausz treyben.

[2] Madensack, literally, bag of worms.

He teaches me and all believers in one and the same way.[1]

In the second place, If you want to tell others about the Gospel in a Christian way, you must consider the persons with whom you are speaking. For you will meet two kinds. There are some who are hardened and will not hear, but with their lies deceive and poison others. To this class belong the pope, Eck, Emser, and some of our bishops, priests and monks. To these men you are not to tell anything about the Gospel at all, but do as Christ says in Matthew vii, "Give not that which is holy to dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and the dogs turn and tear you." Let them remain dogs and swine; your efforts are wasted in any case. Solomon[2] also says, "Where there is none who listens, pour not out words." But when you see that these liars instil their lies and poison into other people, then you are to oppose them boldly and fight against them, just as Paul opposed Elymas with hard and sharp words, and as Christ calls the Pharisees a generation of vipers. This you are to do not for their sake, for they will not listen to you, but for the sake of those whom they are poisoning. For so St. Paul commands Titus to rebuke sharply such vain talkers and deceivers of souls.

Consideration for the Weak

Matt. 7:6

Ecclus. 32:6 (Vulgate)

Acts 13:10 f.

Matt. 23:33

Tit. 1:10, 13

But there are others who have so far heard only this[3] and might be willing to learn if some one taught them, or who are so weak that they cannot readily understand it. These you must not bully and startle, but instruct them in a kindly and gentle manner, point out to them the evidence and the proof, and if they cannot immediately grasp it, have patience with them for a time. St. Paul speaks of this in Romans xv, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye";

Rom. 14:1; 15:1

---

[1] Ich habe mitt der gemeyne die eynige gemeyne lere Christi. Lere is here, as in 2 Tim. 4:2, instruction, teaching in the active sense.

[2] Luther has confused the two men of wisdom, Solomon and the son of Sirach.

[3] Solchs tzuvor nit mehr gehortt habenn, have heard no more about the Gospel than the first class of persons have told them.

1 Pet. 3:15 and St. Peter in I Peter iii, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with gentleness and fear." Here you see that we are to give instruction in our faith with gentleness and in the fear of God to any man who desires or needs it.

The Wrong Way If, in dealing with such people, you want to display your great learning, pounce upon them with the bare assertion that their way of praying, fasting and celebrating mass is wrong, and insist upon eating meat, eggs and other things they regard as forbidden on the fast-day, and with it all do not with gentleness and fear explain to them the why and wherefore, these simple souls cannot help thinking that you are a proud, impudent and wicked man, as in truth you are. They will get the impression that men are not to pray nor to do good, that the mass is nothing, and so on. You have led them into this error and put this stumblingblock in their way, and you will be held accountable for it. That is why they think and speak ill of the holy Gospel and imagine that you have been taught monstrous things. What does it profit you thus to give offence to your neighbor and to lay obstacles in the way of the Gospel? You have cooled your inconsiderate ardor, and men say, "Well, I will keep my old faith," and shut their hearts against the genuine truth.

The Right Way But if you would tell them your reasons with fear and gentleness, as St. Peter teaches you, and say, "My dear man, fasting, the eating of eggs, meat and fish are matters of such a nature that salvation does not depend on them; both the doing of these things and the leaving of them undone may be either right or wrong according to circumstances; faith alone saves," and whatever else ought to be said in such a case, as, for example, that the mass would be a good thing if it were properly celebrated, etc.: this method would draw them to you, they would listen and at last learn what you know. But now that you are so insolent, pride yourself on your superior knowledge, act like the Pharisee in the Gospel, and base your pride on the fact

1 Pet. 3:16

Luke 18:11
John 7:49

that they do not know what you know, you fall under the judgment of St. Paul in Romans xiv, J a m n o n s e c u n d u m c a r i t a t e m a m b u l a s ,[1] and you despise your neighbor whom you ought to serve with meekness and fear. Consider an analogous case. If an enemy had tied a rope about your brother's neck so that he was in danger of his life, and you were so foolish as to rage against the rope and the enemy, and ran up and with all your energy pulled the rope toward you or lunged at it with a knife, you would most likely strangle your brother or stab him, and do more harm than the rope and the enemy had done. If you really want to help your brother, this is what you must do: the enemy you may punish or beat as hard as he deserves, but the rope you must handle gently and with fear until you get it away from your brother's neck, lest you strangle him. Rom. 14:15

In the same way you may be harsh in dealing with the liars, the hardened tyrants, and be bold to do things contrary to their teachings and their works, for they are unwilling to listen to you. But the simple people, whom they have bound with the ropes of their teachings and whose lives are endangered, you must treat quite differently. You must with fear and gentleness undo the teachings of men, tell your reasons, and in this way gradually set them free. This is what St. Paul did when, in defiance of all the Jews, he would not have Titus circumcised, and yet circumcised Timothy. You must treat dogs and swine differently from men, and wolves and lions differently from the weak sheep. With the wolves you cannot be too severe, with the weak sheep you cannot be too gentle. Living as we do among the papists, we must act just as if we lived among the heathen. Indeed, they are sevenfold heathen, and therefore, as St. Peter teaches, we are to have our conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they may not be able to speak any evil of us truthfully, though they would like to do so. It gives them great pleasure to hear that you make a boast of Gal. 2:3 Acts 16:3 1 Pet. 2:12

[1] "Now walkest thou not charitably."

this teaching and give offence to weak hearts; because it gives them an opportunity to decry the whole of the teaching as one that gives offence and does harm, and they have no other way of resisting it, but must acknowledge that it is true.

God grant us all to live as we teach, and to practise what we preach. There are many among us who say, "Lord, Lord," and praise the teaching, but are slow to do what it demands.

Matt. 7:21

Let this suffice for the present, as a renewed[1] warning against insurrection and the giving of offence, that we may not give occasion to men to profane the holy Word of God.

[1] Probably a reference to the sermon of July 15, 1520. Cf. Introduction, p. 203.

SECULAR AUTHORITY

TO WHAT EXTENT IT SHOULD BE OBEYED

1523

INTRODUCTION

LUTHER faced a condition, not simply a theory. He faced the theory of the temporal power of the Church. He faced also the fact. He had protested against the one and defied the other at Worms. Now matters were to be put to the test. The diet had put Luther under the ban of the empire. The Council of Regency, by edict of January 20, 1522, demanded that severe measures be taken to carry out the edict of Worms. It gave assurance of temporal aid. It was now over a year since Luther's books had been burned. In the Netherlands adherents of Luther had lately been imprisoned and threatened with death.[1] Only that fall, after the appearance of his translation of the New Testament, the Dukes of Bavaria, the Elector of Brandenburg, and Duke George of Saxony issued strict orders against the sale and use of the book.[2] Luther knew that the princes were plotting against his life. How should a Christian conduct himself toward such rulers and their power? This set Luther thinking on the questions involved in our treatise.

Again, during his absence at the Wartburg the question had arisen in Wittenberg concerning the interpretation of passages like Matthew v, 39 and Romans xii, 19. The Roman Catholic interpretation was that these are counsels for the perfect,[3] not precepts for all Christians. His answer to Melanchthon from the Wartburg was that the Gospel had nothing to do with the power of the sword, that secular authority was not necessary if all were Christians, but that it must be maintained because of sin. Whence then is the Church's secular authority? In the Open Letter to the Christian Nobility[4] he had denied this authority and had there defined the sepa-

---

[1] See KÖSTLIN-KAWERAU, Martin Luther, i, 580 ff.

[2] See p. 230, note 2.

[3] "Christ in the Gospels laid down certain rules of life and conduct which must be practised by every one of His followers as the necessary condition for attaining to everlasting life. These precepts of the Gospel practically consist of the Decalogue, of the Old Law, interpreted in the sense of the New. Besides these precepts which must be observed by all under pain of eternal damnation, He also taught certain principles which He expressly stated were not to be considered as binding upon all, or as necessary conditions without which heaven could not be obtained, but rather as counsels for those who desired to do more than the minimum and to aim at Christian perfection, so far as that can be obtained here upon earth."—Catholic Encyclopedia, iv, 435 f.

[4] See Vol. II, pp. 167 ff.

rate and distinct spheres of Church and State. It was necessary to reaffirm what he had said then, and also to maintain the divine character of the State against the fanatics who forbade civil offices to Christians.[1]

The basis of our treatise is to be found in the third and fourth of the six sermons preached October 19, 24, 25 and 26, 1522, at Weimar, in the presence of Duke John of Saxony. At the request of the court preacher, Wolfgang Stein, Duke John, and others, Luther undertook the publication of the material. He could not commence the work before the middle of December. Duke George's order against the sale of Luther's New Testament, dated November 7, 1522, may have hastened Luther's efforts.

The material grew under his pen into our treatise, dedicated to Duke John and dated New Year's Day, 1523. By New Year Luther undoubtedly means Christmas, as he does in his Christmas hymn, "Vom Himmel hoch." The date of the treatise, then, is December 25, 1522. It did not appear, however, until March, 1523, for Duke George complains of it to Elector Frederick on March 21st of that year.[2]

The treatise is divided into three parts. In the first part Luther shows, as he had in the Open Letter to the Christian Nobility, that secular authority is ordained of God. Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount are binding on all Christians and refer to personal revenge. They do not forbid even Christians to bear the sword for the sake of others and to curb wickedness. Like the oath, the sword is not needed among Christians.

The main line of discussion is contained in the second part. This takes up the question, in how far secular authority should be obeyed. Its sphere is the kingdom of the world over against the kingdom of God. It is not to invade the latter sphere. Faith is a matter of the individual conscience. God alone bears rule over the soul. God is to be obeyed rather than man. Bishops rule by applying God's Word. Christians are to be ruled by nothing but God's Word.

In the third part are found the remnants of the sermon preached at Weimar. Here Luther instructs the princes how to conduct themselves toward God, toward their subjects, toward their counselors, and toward evil doers. He speaks as the father confessor of the prince.

Our treatise is of political as well as religious significance. It maintains the right of private judgment over against Church and State. It is the first ethical defence of government over against the current Roman Catholic conception, which traced all authority to the Church. It gave the world a new theory of the State, separated State from Church, and made the function of the State the service of its people.

---

[1] The Anabaptists. See Augsburg Confession, Article xvi.

[2] Gess, Akten u. Briefe zur Kirchenpolitik Hzg. Georgs (Leipzig, 1905), i, 486 ff.

The text of the treatise is found in the following editions: Weimar Ed., xi, 229 ff.; Erlangen Ed., xxii, 60 ff.; Walch Ed., x, 426 ff.; St. Louis Ed., x, 374 ff.; Berlin Ed., vii, 224 ff.; Clemen, ii, 360 ff. This translation is based on the text as given in Clemen.

J. J. SCHINDEL.

ALLENTOWN, PA.

SECULAR AUTHORITY:

TO WHAT EXTENT IT SHOULD BE OBEYED.

1523

LETTER OF DEDICATION

To the Illustrious, High-born Prince and Lord, John, Duke of Saxony, Landgrave of Thuringia, Margrave of Meissen, My Gracious Lord.

Grace and peace in Christ. Again, illustrious, high-born prince, gracious lord, necessity is laid upon me, and the entreaties of many, and above all your grace's wishes impel me, to write concerning the secular authorities and the sword they bear; how it should be used in a Christian manner and in how far men are bound to obey it. For men are perplexed by the word of Christ in Matthew v, "Thou shalt not resist evil, but agree with thine adversary; and if any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also," and Romans xii, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." These very texts Prince Volusian of old quoted against Saint Augustine,[1] and charged Christianity with permitting the wicked to do evil and with being incompatible with the power of the sword.

Matt. 5:25, 39, 40

Rom. 12:19

[1] AUGUSTINE, Ep. 136 and 138 (Migne, xxxiii, pp. 514 ff. and pp. 525 ff.).

The sophists[1] in the universities also were perplexed by these texts, because they could not reconcile the two spheres. In order not to make heathen of the princes, they taught that these sayings of Christ are not precepts but counsels of perfection.[2] Thus Christ had to become a liar and be in error, in order that the princes might continue in honor. For they could not exalt the princes without putting down Christ,—wretched blind sophists that they are. And thus their poisonous error has spread through the whole world, so that every one regards these teachings of Christ as counsels of perfection, and not as precepts binding on all Christians alike. It has gone so far that they have permitted the imperfect duty of the sword and of secular authority not only to the perfect class of bishops, but even to the pope, whose rank is the most perfect of all; nay, they have ascribed it to no one on earth so completely as to him. So thoroughly has the devil taken possession of the sophists and of the universities, that they themselves do not know what and how they speak or teach.

I hope, however, to instruct the princes and the secular authorities in such a way that they shall remain Christians and that Christ shall remain Lord, yet so that Christ's commandments need not for their sake be changed into counsels.

This will I do as a dutiful service to your princely grace, for the profiting of every one who may need it, and to the praise and glory of Christ our Lord. I commend your princely grace with all your kin to the grace of God. May He mercifully have you in His keeping. Amen.

Your Princely Grace's obedient servant,
Martin Luther.

Wittenberg, New Year's Day,[3] 1523.

---

[1] The scholastic theologians.
[2] See above, p. 225, note 3.
[3] See Introduction, above, p. 226.

THE TREATISE

Formerly I addressed a booklet to the German nobility,[1] setting forth their Christian office and functions. But how they have carried out my suggestions is very plain to see. Hence I must change my tactics and write them, this time, what they should omit and not do. I fear this writing will have just as little effect on them as the former one had,—they will by all means remain princes and by no means become Christians. For God Almighty has made our rulers mad. They actually think they have the power to do and command their subjects to do, whatever they please. And the subjects are led astray and believe they are bound to obey them in everything. It has gone so far that the rulers have ordered the people to put away books, and to believe and keep what they prescribe. In this way they presumptuously set themselves in God's place, lord it over men's conscience and faith, and put the Holy Spirit to school according to their mad brains. They let it be known, at the same time, that they are not to be contradicted, but called gracious lords into the bargain.

They issue public proclamations, saying that this is the emperor's command[2] and they desire to be Christian and obedient princes, as though they were in earnest about it and one did not see the knave behind the mask. If the emperor took a castle or a city from them or commanded some other injustice, we should see how quickly they would find themselves obliged to resist the emperor and disobey him.

But when it comes to fleecing the poor and to doing what they please with God's Word, it must be called obedience to the imperial command. Such people were

---

[1] Cf. Vol. II, pp. 55 ff.

[2] Reference to the proclamation of Duke George (see above, p. 225) printed and posted at various places in his realm. Gess, Akten und Briefe, i, 386 f.

formerly called knaves, now they must be addressed as Christian and loyal princes. Yet they will not permit any one to appear before them for a hearing or to defend himself, no matter how humbly he may petition. If the emperor or any one else should do the same to them they would regard it as most intolerable. These are the princes who rule the empire in German lands to-day; hence also there must needs be such prosperity in all lands, as we see.

Because the raving of such fools tends to the suppression of Christian faith, the denying of the divine Word, and the blaspheming of the divine Majesty, I can and will no longer look upon my ungracious lords and angry nobles, but must resist them at least with words. And since I have not been in terror of their idol, the pope, who threatens to deprive me of soul and of heaven, I must show that I am not in terror of his scales and bubbles[1] which threaten to deprive me of body and of earth. God grant that they may have to rage until grey habits[2] perish, and that we die not of their threatenings. Amen.

Secular Authority of God

I. We must firmly establish secular law and the sword, that no one may doubt that it is in the world by God's will and ordinance. The passages which establish this are the following: Romans xiii, "Let every soul be subject to power and authority, for there is no power but from God. The power that is everywhere is ordained of God. He then who resists the power resists God's ordinance. But he who resists God's ordinance shall bring himself under condemnation." Likewise, I Peter ii, "Be subject to every kind of human ordinance, whether to the king as supreme, or to the governors, as to those sent of Him for the punishing of the evil and for the reward of the good."

Rom. 13:1 f.

1 Pet. 2:13

This penal law existed from the beginning of the world. For when Cain slew his brother he was in such great terror

Gen. 4:14 f.

[1] Luther finds the pope pictured as leviathan in Job. 41 : 15. "Bulla," bull, may be translated bubble (in German, "Wasserblase").

[2] The Grey Friars—the Franciscans.

of being in turn killed that God specially forbade it and suspended the sword for his sake,—and no one was to slay him. He would not have had this fear if he had not seen and heard from Adam that murderers should be slain. Moreover God re-established and confirmed it after the Flood in unmistakable terms when He said,
Gen. 9:6 "Whoso sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed again by man." This cannot be understood as a plague and punishment of God upon murderers; for many murderers who repent or are pardoned continue to live, and die by other means than the sword. But it is said of the right of the sword, that a murderer is guilty of death and should in justice be slain by the sword. Though justice be hindered or the sword be tardy, so that the murderer dies a natural death, the Scripture is not on that account false when it says, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." For it is men's fault or merit that this law commanded of God is not carried out; even as other commandments of God are broken.

Afterward it was also confirmed by the law of Moses,
Ex. 21:14 Exodus xxi, "If a man presumptuously kill thou shalt take him from My altar that he may die." And again, in the
Ex. 21:23 ff. same place, "A life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a foot for a foot, a hand for a hand, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise." Christ also confirms it
Matt. 26:52 when He says to Peter in the garden, "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword," which is to be interpreted like Genesis ix, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood," etc. Doubtless Christ refers in these words to that passage and incorporates and confirms it in them. John Baptist teaches the same. When the soldiers asked him what they should
Luke 3:14 do, he answered, "Do injustice or violence to no one, and be content with your wages." If the sword were not divinely appointed he should have commanded them to cease being soldiers, since he was to perfect the people and direct them in a proper Christian way. Hence it is sufficiently clear and certain that it is God's will that the

sword and secular law be used for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the upright. 1 Pet. 2:14

II. There seems to be a powerful argument on the other side. Christ says, Matthew v, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, That a man shall not resist evil, but if any one strikes thee upon the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and whoever will go to law with thee to take thy coat, let him have the cloak also, and whoever forces thee a mile, with him go two miles." Likewise Paul, Romans xii, "Dearly beloved, defend not yourselves, but give place to God's wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord." Likewise Matthew v, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." And I Peter iii, "Let no one repay evil with evil, nor railing with railing," etc. These and the like passages truly would make it appear as though in the New Testament there should be no secular sword among Christians. **Non-resistance** Matt. 5:38 f. Rom. 12:19 Matt. 5:44 1 Pet. 3:9

Hence the sophists also say that Christ has abolished Moses' law; of such commandments they make counsels for the perfect, and divide Christian teaching and Christians into two classes. One part they call the perfect, and assign to it such counsels. To the other, the imperfect, they assign the commandments. This they do out of sheer perversity and caprice, without any scriptural basis. They do not see that in the same passage Christ lays such stress on His teaching that He is unwilling to have the least word of it set aside, and condemns to hell those who do not love their enemies. Therefore we must interpret these passages differently, so that Christ's words may apply to all alike whether they be "perfect" or "imperfect." For perfection and imperfection consist not in works and do not establish a distinct external order among Christians; but they exist in the heart,[1] in faith and love, so Matt. 5:19 Matt. 5:25 ff.

[1] Cf. Matt. 5:48.

that they who believe and love the most are the perfect ones, whether outwardly they be male or female, prince or peasant, monk or layman. For love and faith produce no sects or outward differences.[1]

The Two Kingdoms

III. We must divide all the children of Adam into two classes; the first belong to the kingdom of God, the second to the kingdom of the world. Those belonging to the kingdom of God are all true believers in Christ and are subject to Christ. For Christ is the King and Lord in
Ps. 2:6 the kingdom of God, as the second Psalm and all the Scriptures say. For this reason He came into the world, that He might begin God's kingdom and establish it in
John 18:36 f. the world. Therefore He says before Pilate, "My kingdom is not of the world, but whoever is of the truth hears My voice"; and continually in the Gospel He refers to
Matt. 3:2 the kingdom of God and says, "Amend your ways, the
Matt. 6:33 kingdom of God is at hand." Likewise, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." He also calls the Gospel, a Gospel of the kingdom, for the reason that it teaches, governs, and contains God's kingdom.

Christians Need No Law

Now observe, these people need no secular sword or law. And if all the world were composed of real Christians, that is, true believers, no prince, king, lord, sword, or law would be needed. For what were the use of them, since Christians have in their hearts the Holy Spirit, who instructs them and causes them to wrong no one, to love every one, willingly and cheerfully to suffer injustice and even death from every one. Where every wrong is suffered and every right is done, no quarrel, strife, trial, judge, penalty, law or sword is needed. Therefore, it is not possible for the secular sword and law to find any work to do among Christians, since of themselves they do much more than its laws and doctrines can demand. Just
1 Tim. 1:19 as Paul says in I Timothy i, "The law is not given for the righteous, but for the unrighteous."

[1] Cf. Treatise on the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 295.

Why is this? Because the righteous does of himself all and more than all that all the laws demand. But the unrighteous do nothing that the law demands, therefore they need the law to instruct, constrain, and compel them to do what is good. A good tree does not need any teaching or law to bear good fruit, its nature causes it to bear according to its kind without any law and teaching. A man would be a fool to make a book of laws and statutes telling an apple tree how to bear apples and not thorns, when it is able by its own nature to do this better than man with all his books can define and direct. Just so, by the Spirit and by faith all Christians are throughout inclined to do well and keep the law, much more than any one can teach them with all the laws, and need so far as they are concerned no commandments nor law. Matt. 7:18

You ask, Why then did God give to all men so many commandments, and why did Christ teach in the Gospel so many things to be done? Concerning this I have written much in the Postil[1] and elsewhere. To put it as briefly as possible here, Paul says that the law is given for the sake of the unrighteous, that is, that those who are not Christians may through the law be externally restrained from evil deeds, as we shall hear later. Since, however, no one is by nature Christian or pious, but every one sinful and evil, God places the restraints of the law upon them all, so that they may not dare give rein to their desires and commit outward, wicked deeds. In addition, St. Paul gives the law another function in Romans vii and Galatians iii. It is to teach men to recognize sin, that they may be made humble unto grace and unto faith in Christ. Christ also does this here, when He teaches in Matthew v that we should not resist evil, and thereby glorifies the law and teaches how a real Christian ought to be and must be disposed, as we shall hear further on. 1 Tim. 1:9 Rom. 7:7 Gal. 3:19, 24 Matt. 5:39

[1] A collection of sermons on the Scripture lessons for the Church Year. Luther's Advent Postil was published in Latin in 1521 and in German in 1522.

Non-Christians Under the Law

IV. All who are not Christians belong to the kingdom of the world and are under the law. Since few believe and still fewer live a Christian life, do not resist the evil, and themselves do no evil, God has provided for non-Christians a different government outside the Christian estate and God's kingdom, and has subjected them to the sword, so that, even though they would do so, they cannot practice their wickedness, and that, if they do, they may not do it without fear nor in peace and prosperity. Even so a wild, savage beast is fastened with chains and bands, so that it cannot bite and tear as is its wont, although it gladly would do so; whereas a tame and gentle beast does not require this, but without any chains and bands is nevertheless harmless. If it were not so, seeing that the whole world is evil and that among thousands there is scarcely one true Christian, men would devour one another, and no one could preserve wife and child, support himself and serve God; and thus the world would be reduced to chaos. For this reason God has ordained the two governments;' the spiritual, which by the Holy Spirit under Christ makes Christians and pious people, and the secular, which restrains the unchristian and wicked so that they must needs keep the peace outwardly, even against their will. So Paul interprets the secular sword, Romans xiii, and says it is not a terror to good works, but to the evil. And Peter says it is for the punishment of evil doers.

Spiritual and Secular Government

Rom. 13:3

1 Pet. 2:14

Secular Government Indispensable

If any one attempted to rule the world by the Gospel, and put aside all secular law and the secular sword, on the plea that all are baptised and Christian, and that according to the Gospel, there is to be among them neither law nor sword, nor necessity for either, pray, what would happen? He would loose the bands and chains of the wild and savage beasts, and let them tear and mangle every one, and at the same time say they were quite tame and gentle creatures; but I would have the proof in my wounds. Just so would the wicked under the name of Christian

abuse this freedom of the Gospel, carry on their knavery, and say that they were Christians subject neither to law nor sword, as some[1] are already raving and ranting.

To such an one we must say, It is indeed true that Christians, so far as they themselves are concerned, are subject to neither law nor sword and need neither; but first take heed and fill the world with real Christians before ruling it in a Christian and evangelical manner. This you will never accomplish; for the world and the masses are and always will be unchristian, although they are all baptised and are nominally Christian. Christians, however, are few and far between, as the saying is. Therefore it is out of the question that there should be a common Christian government over the whole world, nay even over one land or company of people, since the wicked always outnumber the good. Hence a man who would venture to govern an entire country or the world with the Gospel would be like a shepherd who should place in one fold wolves, lions, eagles, and sheep together and let them freely mingle with one another and say, Help yourselves, and be good and peaceful among yourselves; the fold is open, there is plenty of food; have no fear of dogs and clubs. The sheep, forsooth, would keep the peace and would allow themselves to be fed and governed in peace, but they would not live long; nor would any beast keep from molesting another.

For this reason these two kingdoms must be sharply distinguished, and both be permitted to remain; the one to produce piety, the other to bring about external peace and prevent evil deeds; neither is sufficient in the world without the other. For no one can become pious before God by means of the secular government, without Christ's spiritual rule. Hence Christ's rule does not extend over all, but Christians are always in the minority and are in the midst of non-Christians. Where there is only secular rule or law, there, of necessity, is sheer hypocrisy,

[1] See Introduction, above, p. 126.

though the commandments be God's very own. Without the Holy Spirit in the heart no one becomes really pious, he may do as fine works as he will. Where, on the other hand, the spiritual government rules alone over land and people, there evil is given free rein and the door is opened for every kind of knavery; for the natural world cannot receive or comprehend spiritual things.

Matt. 5:39

Christians Not to Use Secular Law Among Themselves

You see the purpose of Christ's words which we quoted above from Matthew v. They mean that Christians shall not go to law nor use the secular sword among themselves. In reality He says it only to His dear Christians. They alone also accept it and act accordingly, nor do they make counsels[1] of it, as the sophists do, but are so inclined in their heart, through the Spirit, that they do evil to no one and willingly endure evil at every one's hands. If the whole world were Christian, all these words would apply to it and it would keep them. Since, however, it is unchristian the words do not apply to it, nor does it keep them, but is under another rule in which those who are not Christians are under external constraint and are forced to keep the peace and do what is good.

For this reason Christ did not wield the sword nor give it a place in His kingdom; for He is a King over Christians and rules by His Holy Spirit alone, without law. And although He acknowledged the sword, He nevertheless did not use it; for it is of no use in His kingdom, in which are none but the pious. Hence David of old dared not build the temple, because he had shed much blood and had borne the sword; not that he had done wrong thereby, but because he could not be a type of Christ, who without the sword was to have a kingdom of peace. It must be built by Solomon, whose name means "Frederick" or "peaceful," who had a peaceful kingdom, by which the truly peaceful kingdom of Christ, the real Frederick[2] and

2 Sam. 7:5 ff.

1 Kings 5:17 ff.

[1] See above, p. 229.

[2] Friedrich," "Frederick," meaning "peaceful," is a literal translation of the Hebrew "Solomon."

Solomon, could be represented. In like manner, during the entire building of the temple not the sound of a tool was heard, as the text says; all for this reason, that Christ, without constraint and force, without law and the sword, was to have a people who serve Him freely. 1 Kings 6:7

This is what the prophets mean in Psalm cx, "Thy people shall be willing"; and in Isaiah xi, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain"; and in Isaiah ii, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and no one shall lift up the sword against another, neither shall they busy themselves in war anymore," etc. Whoever would apply these and similar passages wherever Christ's name is professed, would entirely pervert the Scriptures; for they are spoken only of true Christians, who really do this among themselves. Ps. 110:3 Isa. 11:9 Isa. 2:4

V. But perhaps you will say, Since Christians do not need the secular sword and the law, why does Paul say to all Christians, in Romans xiii, "Let all souls be subject to power and authority"? And St. Peter says, "Be subject to every human ordinance," etc., as quoted above. I answer, as I have said, that Christians, among themselves and by and for themselves, need no law or sword, since it is neither necessary nor profitable for them. Since, however, a true Christian lives and labors on earth not for himself, but for his neighbor, therefore the whole spirit of his life impels him to do even that which he need not do, but which is profitable and necessary for his neighbor. Because the sword is a very great benefit and necessary to the whole world, to preserve peace, to punish sin and to prevent evil, he submits most willingly to the rule of the sword, pays tax, honors those in authority, serves, helps, and does all he can to further the government, that it may be sustained and held in honor and fear. Although he needs none of these things for himself and it is not necessary for him to do them, yet he considers what is

Christians Subject to Secular Authority in Love Rom. 13:1 1 Pet. 2:13

for the good and profit of others, as Paul teaches in
Eph. 5:21 Ephesians v.

He serves the State as he performs all other works of love, which he himself does not need. He visits the sick, not that he may be made well; feeds no one because he himself needs food: so he also serves the State not because he needs it, but because others need it,—that they may be protected and that the wicked may not become worse. He loses nothing by this, and such service in no way harms him, and yet it is of great profit to the world. If he did not do it, he would be acting not as a Christian but contrary even to love, and would also be setting a bad example to others, who like him would not submit to authority, though they were no Christians. In this way the Gospel would be brought into disrepute, as though it taught rebellion and made self-willed people, unwilling to benefit or serve any one, when in reality it makes a Christian the servant of every one. Thus in Matthew
Matt. 17:27 xvii, Christ gave the tribute money that He might not offend them, although He did not need to do it.

Thus you observe in the words of Christ quoted above
Matt. 5:39 from Matthew v that He indeed teaches that Christians among themselves should have no secular sword nor law. He does not, however, forbid one to serve and obey those who have the secular sword and the law; much rather, since you have no need of them and are not to have them, are you to serve those who have not progressed so far as you and still need them. Although you do not need to have your enemy punished, your weak neighbor does. You should help him, that he may have peace and that his enemy may be curbed; which is not possible unless power and authority are honored and feared. Christ does not say, "Thou shalt not serve the State or be subject to it," but "Thou shalt not resist evil." As though He said, "Take heed that you bear everything, so that you may not need the State to help and serve you and be of profit to you, but that you may on the other hand, help, serve,

and be of profit and use to it. I would have you to be far too exalted and noble to have any need of it, but it should have need of you."

Christians May Bear the Sword

VI. You ask whether a Christian, also, may bear the secular sword and punish the wicked, since Christ's words, "Thou shalt not resist the evil," are so clear and definite that the sophists have had to make a counsel of them. I answer, You have now heard two propositions. The one is, that the sword can have no place among Christians, therefore you cannot bear it among and against Christians, who do not need it. The question, therefore, must be directed to the other side, to the non-Christians, whether as a Christian you may there bear it. Here the other proposition applies, that you are under obligation to serve and further the sword by whatever means you can, with body, soul, honor or goods. For it is nothing that you need, but something quite useful and profitable for the whole world and for your neighbor. Therefore, should you see that there is a lack of hangmen, beadles, judges, lords, or princes, and find that you are qualified, you should offer your services and seek the place, that necessary government may by no means be despised and become inefficient or perish. For the world cannot and dare not dispense with it.

The reason you should do this is, that in this case you would enter entirely into the service and work of others, which benefited neither yourself nor your property nor your character, but only your neighbor and others; and you would do it not to avenge yourself or to recompense evil for evil, but for the good of your neighbor and for the maintenance of the safety and peace of others. As concerns yourself, you would abide by the Gospel and govern yourself according to Christ's word, gladly turning the other cheek and letting the mantle go with the coat, when the matter concerned you and your cause. In this way, then, things are well balanced, and you satisfy at the same

Matt. 5:39, 40

time God's kingdom inwardly and the kingdom of the world outwardly, at the same time suffer evil and injustice and yet punish evil and injustice, at the same time do not resist evil and yet resist it. For in the one case you consider yourself and what is yours, in the other you consider your neighbor and what is his. In what concerns you and yours, you govern yourself by the Gospel and suffer injustice for yourself as a true Christian; in what concerns others and belongs to them, you govern yourself according to love and suffer no injustice for your neighbor's sake; this the Gospel does not forbid, but rather commands in another place.

Proof from the Old Testament

In this way all the saints wielded the sword from the beginning of the world: Adam and his descendants; Abraham when he rescued Lot, his brother's son, and smote the four kings, though he was a thoroughly evangelical man; Samuel, the holy prophet, slew King Agag, and Elijah the prophets of Baal. So did Moses, Joshua, the children of Israel, Samson, David, and all the kings and princes in the Old Testament. In the same way did Daniel and his associates, Ananias, Asarias and Misael, in Babylon; in the same manner did Joseph in Egypt, and so on.

Gen. 14:15
1 Sam. 15:33
1 Kings 18:40

Should any one advance the argument, that the Old Testament is abolished and avails no more, and that therefore such examples cannot be set before Christians, I answer, That is not correct. For St. Paul says in I Corinthians x, "They did all eat the same spiritual meat as we, and did drink the same spiritual drink from the rock, which is Christ"; that is, they have had the same spirit and faith in Christ as we and were Christians as well as we are. Therefore, wherein they did right, all Christians do right, from the beginning of the world unto the end. For time and external circumstances matter not among Christians. Neither is it true that the Old Testament was abolished in such a way that it need not be kept, or that it would be wrong for any one to keep it in full, as St. Jerome and many more erred in thinking. It is indeed abolished in the sense

1 Cor. 10:3

that we are free to keep it or not to keep it, and it is no longer necessary to keep it on penalty of one's soul, as was formerly the case.

For Paul says in I Corinthians vii and Galatians vi, that neither uncircumcision nor circumcision avails anything, but a new creature in Christ; that is, it is not sin to be uncircumcised, as the Jews thought, nor is it sin to be circumcised, as the heathen thought, but either is right and permissible for him who does not think he will be saved by so doing. This is true also of all other parts of the Old Testament; it is not wrong to omit them nor wrong to do them, but all is permissible and good, to do and to leave undone. Nay, if they were necessary or profitable to one's fellow-man for his salvation, it would be necessary to keep them all; for every one is under obligation to do what is for his neighbor's good, whether it be Old or New Testament, Jewish or heathen, as Paul teaches in I Corinthians xii, for love pervades all and transcends all, considers only what is for the profit of others, and does not ask whether it is old or new. Hence, the precedents for the use of the sword also are matters of freedom, and you may follow them or not, but where you see that your neighbor needs it, there love contrains you so that you must needs do what otherwise would be optional and unnecessary for you to do or to leave undone. Only do not suppose that you will grow pious or be saved thereby, as the Jews presumed to be saved by their works, but leave this to faith, which without works makes you a new creature.

1 Cor. 7:19 Gal. 6:15

1 Cor. 12:13

To prove our position also by the New Testament, the testimony of John Baptist in Luke iii cannot be shaken on this point. It was his work to point to Christ, to witness for Him, and to teach about Him; and the teaching of the man who was to prepare a people for Christ and lead them to Him, has of necessity to be purely New Testament and evangelical. And he endorses the work of the soldiers and says they should be content with their wages. If

Proof from the New Testament Luke 3:14

it had been an unchristian thing to bear the sword, he ought to have censured them for it and told them to abandon both wages and sword, or he would not have taught them the Christian estate correctly. So also, when St. Peter in Acts x preached Christ to Cornelius, he did not tell him to abandon his work, which he would have had to do if it had prevented Cornelius from being a Christian. Moreover, before he was baptised, the Holy Ghost came upon him. St. Luke also lauds him as a pious man previous to Peter's sermon, and does not find fault with him because he was a captain of soldiers and under a heathen emperor. What the Holy Ghost permitted to remain and did not censure in Cornelius' case, it is meet that we too should permit and not censure.

Acts 10: 34 ff.

Acts 10:44

A similar case is that of the Ethiopian captain, the eunuch, in Acts viii, whom Philip the evangelist converted and baptised and permitted to remain in his work and to return home again, although without bearing the sword he could not possibly have been so high an official under the queen in Ethiopia. It was the same with the governor in Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, in Acts xiii, whom St. Paul converted, and yet permitted to remain governor among heathen and over heathen. Many holy martyrs did the same, who were obedient to heathen Roman emperors, and went under them into battle, and doubtless also slew people, for the sake of preserving peace; as is written of St. Maurice,[1] St. Achacius,[2] St. Gereon,[3] and many others under the emperor Julian.[4]

Acts 8:30 ff.

Acts 13:12

Beyond these, we have the clear, definite statement of St. Paul in Romans xiii, where he says, "The powers that

Rom. 13:1

[1] St. Maurice, patron saint of the city of Magdeburg, was the commander of the Theban Legion, which was exterminated by the Emperor Maximian because of its refusal to aid in the suppression of Christianity. Catholic Encyclopedia, x, 38 f.

[2] St. Acacius, bishop of Mitylene in the third century, probably a victim of the Decian persecution (249–251 A. D.). See Catholic Encyclopedia, i, 83.

[3] St. Gereon, a centurion of the Theban Legion (see note 1).

[4] The Apostate (A. D. 361–63).

be are ordained of God"; and again, "The power does not bear the sword in vain, but is the minister of God for thy good, an avenger unto him that doeth evil." Be not so wicked, my friend, as to say, A Christian may not do that which is God's peculiar work, ordinance and creation. Else you must also say, A Christian must not eat, drink or be married, for these are also God's work and ordinance. If it is God's work and creation, it is good, and so good that every one can use it in a Christian and saving way, as Paul says in I Timothy iv, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected by the believing and those who know the truth." Among "every creature of God" you must reckon not simply food and drink, clothes and shoes, but also government, citizenship, protection and administration of justice.

Rom. 13:4

1 Tim. 4:4

In short, since St. Paul here says the power is God's servant, we must admit that it is to be exercised not only by the heathen, but by all men. What else does it mean when it is said it is God's servant except that the power is by its very nature such that one may serve God by it? Now, it should be quite unchristian to say that there is any service of God in which a Christian ought not and dare not take part, when such a service belongs to no one so much as to Christians. It would indeed be good and profitable if all princes were real and good Christians, for the sword and the government, as a special service of God, belong of right to Christians, more than to all other men on earth. Therefore you should cherish the sword or the government, even as the state of matrimony, or husbandry, or any other handiwork which God has instituted. As a man can serve God in the state of matrimony, in husbandry, or at a trade, for the benefit of his fellowman, and must serve Him if necessity demand; just so he can also serve God in the State and should serve Him there, if the necessities of his neighbor demand it; for the State is God's servant and workman to punish the evil and protect the good. Still it may also be omitted if there is no

Rom. 13:1

need for it, just as men are free not to marry and not to farm if there should be no need of marrying and farming.

The Example of Christ

You ask, Why did not Christ and the apostles bear the sword? Tell me, Why did He not also take a wife, or become a cobbler or a tailor? If an occupation or office is not good because Christ Himself did not occupy it, what would become of all occupations and offices, with the exception of the ministry which alone He exercised? Christ fulfilled His own office and vocation, but thereby did not reject any other. It was not meet that He should bear the sword, for He was to bear only that office by which His kingdom is governed and which properly serves His kingdom. Now it does not concern His kingdom that He should be a married man, a cobbler, a tailor, a farmer, a prince, a hangman or a beadle, neither is the sword or secular law of any concern, but only God's Word and Spirit, by which His people are inwardly governed. This office which He exercised then, and still exercises, always bestows God's Word and Spirit; and in this office the apostles and all spiritual rulers must needs follow Him. For they are kept so busily employed with the spiritual sword, the Word of God, in fulfilling this their calling, that they must indeed neglect the worldly sword, and leave it to those who do not have to preach; although it is not contrary to their calling to use it, as I have said. For every one must attend to his own calling and work.

Therefore, even though Christ did not bear the sword nor prescribe it, it is sufficient that He did not forbid or abolish it, but rather endorsed it; just as it is sufficient that He did not abolish the state of matrimony, but endorsed it, though He Himself took no wife and gave no commandment concerning it. He had to identify Himself throughout with the occupation and work which properly and entirely served the furtherance of His kingdom, so that no occasion and binding example might be made of it, to teach and believe that the kingdom of God cannot exist without matrimony and the sword and such

externals (since Christ's examples are binding), when it is only by God's Word and Spirit that it does exist. This was and had to be Christ's peculiar work as the supreme King in this kingdom. Since, however, not all Christians have this same office, though innately it belongs to them, it is meet that they should have some other, external one, by which God may also be served.

The Meaning of Christ's Words Matt. 5:39

From all this we see what is the true meaning of Christ's words in Matthew v, "Resist not evil," etc. It is this, that a Christian should be so disposed that he will suffer every evil and injustice, not avenge himself nor bring suit in court, and in nothing make use of secular power and law for himself. For others, however, he may and should seek vengeance, justice, protection and help, and do what he can toward this. Likewise, the State should, either of itself or through the instigation of others, help and protect him without complaint, application or instigation on his part. When the State does not do this, he ought to permit himself to be robbed and despoiled, and not resist the evil, as Christ's words say.

Be quite certain, also, that this teaching of Christ is not a counsel of perfection,[1] as our sophists blasphemously and falsely say, but a universal, strict command for all Christians. Then you will learn that all those who avenge themselves or go to law and wrangle in the courts over their property and honor are nothing but heathen masquerading under the name of Christians. It cannot be otherwise, I tell you. Do not look to the multitude and to the common practice, for, have no doubt, there are few Christians on earth; and God's Word is something very different from the common practice.[2]

You see that Christ does not abolish the law when He says, "You have heard that it was said to them of old:

---

[1] See above, p. 229.

[2] Cf. TERTULLIAN, *De velandis virginibus*, Migne, ii, 889, "Christ did not say, 'I am the common practice, but I am the truth.'"

Matt. 5:38 An eye for an eye; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil," etc. But He expounds the meaning of the law as it is to be understood, as though He would say, You Jews consider it right and good before God if you recover by law what belongs to you, and you rely on what Moses said, An eye for an eye, etc. I say unto you, however, that Moses gave such a law for the wicked, who do not belong to God's kingdom, that they might not avenge themselves or do worse things, but be compelled by such outward law to desist from evil-doing, in order that by outward law and rule they might be kept under authority. But you should so conduct yourselves as not to need or invoke such a law. Although the secular authority must have such a law by which to judge unbelievers, and although you yourselves might use it to judge others, still you should not invoke or use it for yourselves and in your own affairs. You have the kingdom of heaven; therefore you should leave the kingdom of earth to any one who wants to take it.

You see, then, Christ's words do not mean that He abolishes Moses' law, or prohibits secular power, but He excepts His own. They are not to use them for themselves, but to leave them to unbelievers, whom indeed they may serve with the law. For unbelievers are not Christians; and no one can be compelled to be a Christian. But that Christ's words apply only to His own is evident, since He afterward says they should love their enemies and be perfect like their heavenly Father. He, however, who loves his enemies lets the law alone and does not use it to demand an eye for an eye. Neither does he oppose the non-Christians who do not love their enemies and wish to use the law; nay, he lends his help that these laws may restrain the wicked from doing worse.

Matt. 5:44, 48

In this way, I take it, the word of Christ is reconciled with the passages which establish the sword, so that this is the meaning: No Christian shall wield or invoke the sword for himself and for his cause; but for another he can and

ought to wield and invoke it, so that wickedness may be hindered and godliness defended. Even as the Lord says, in the same passage, A Christian shall not swear, but let his word be Yea, yea; Nay, nay,—that is, for himself and of his own choice and desire, he should not swear. When, however, need, welfare and salvation, or God's honor demand, he should swear; thus he uses the forbidden oath to serve another, just as he uses the forbidden sword in another's service; as Christ and Paul often swore to make their teaching and testimony valuable and credible to others, as men do and have a right to do in covenants and compacts, of which Psalm lxiii says, "They shall be praised who swear by His name." Matt. 5:34 ff. Ps. 63:11

Civil Officers in a State of Salvation

But you ask further, whether the beadles, hangmen, jurists, advocates, and their ilk, can also be Christians and in a state of salvation. I answer: If the State and its sword are a divine service, as was proved above, that which the State needs in order to wield the sword must also be a divine service. There must be those who arrest, accuse, slay and destroy the wicked, and protect, acquit, defend and save the good. Therefore, when such duties are performed, not with the intention of seeking one's own ends, but only of helping to maintain the laws and the State, so that the wicked may be restrained, there is no peril in them and they may be followed like any other pursuit and be used as one's means of support. For, as was said, love of neighbor seeks not its own, considers not how great or how small, but how profitable and how needful for neighbor or community the works are. 1 Cor. 13:5

You ask, Why may I not use the sword for myself and for my own cause, with the intention by so doing not of seeking my own interest, but the punishment of evil? I answer, Such a miracle is not impossible, but quite unusual and hazardous. Where there is such affluence of the Spirit it may be done, for so we read of Samson in Judges xv, that he said, "I have done unto them as they did unto me"; yet, on the contrary, Proverbs xxix says, "Say not, I Judges 15:11

Prov. 24:29 will do unto him as he has done unto me"; and Proverbs xxiv, "Say not thou, I will recompense evil." Prov. 20:22 For Samson was called of God to harass the Philistines and deliver the children of Israel. Though he used them as an occasion to advance his own cause, still he did not do so to avenge himself or to seek his own interests, but to serve others and to punish the Philistines. No one but a real Christian and one who is full of the Spirit will follow this example. If reason also should follow this example, it would indeed pretend not to be seeking its own, but this would be untrue. It cannot be done without grace. Therefore, first become like Samson, and then you can also do as Samson did.

PART TWO

How Far Secular Authority Extends

We come now to the main part of this treatise. For as we have learned that there must be temporal authority on earth, and how it is to be employed in a Christian and salutary way, we must now learn how far its arm extends and how far its hand reaches, lest it extend too far and encroach upon God's kingdom and rule. And it is very necessary to know this, since where it is given too wide a scope, intolerable and terrible injury follows; and, on the other hand, it cannot be too much restricted without working injury. In the latter case the punishment is too light; in the former, too severe. It is more tolerable, however, to err on the latter side and punish too little; since it always is better to let a knave live than to kill a good man, for the world will still have knaves, and must have them, but of good men there are few.

In the first place, it must be noted that the two classes of Adam's children, the one in God's kingdom under Christ, the other in the kingdom of the world under the State, have two kinds of laws, as was said above. Every kingdom must have its own laws and regulations, and without law no kingdom or government can exist, as daily

experience sufficiently proves. Worldly government has laws which extend no farther than to life and property and what is external upon earth. For over the soul God can and will let no one rule but Himself. Therefore, where temporal power presumes to prescribe laws for the soul, it encroaches upon God's government and only misleads and destroys the souls. We desire to make this so clear that every one shall grasp it, and that our junkers, the princes and bishops, may see what fools they are when they seek to coerce the people with their laws and commandments into believing one thing or another.

Secular Authority Does Not Extend to the Soul

When a man-made law is imposed upon the soul, in order to make it believe this or that, as that man prescribes, there is certainly no word of God for it. If there is no word of God for it, it is uncertain whether God will have it so, for we cannot be certain that what He does not command pleases Him. Nay, we are sure that it does not please Him, for He desires that our faith be grounded simply and entirely on His divine Word, as He says in Matthew xvi, "On this rock will I build my church"; and in John x, "My sheep hear my voice and know me; but the voice of strangers they hear not, but flee from them." It follows from this that the secular power forces souls to eternal death with such an outrageous law, for it compels them to believe as right and certainly pleasing to God what is nevertheless uncertain, nay, what is certainly displeasing to Him, since there is no clear word of God for it. For whoever believes that to be right which is wrong or uncertain denies the truth, which is God Himself, and believes in lies and errors and counts that right which is wrong.

Matt. 16:18 John 10: 27, 5

Hence it is the height of folly when they command that one shall believe the Church,[1] the fathers, the councils, though there be no word of God for it. The devil's apostles command such things, not the Church; for the Church[2]

[1] The church organization.
[2] The congregation of believers.

commands nothing unless it is sure it is God's Word, as
1 Pet. 4:11 St. Peter says, "If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God." It will be a very long time, however, before they prove that the statements of the councils are God's Word. Still more foolish is it when they assert that kings and princes and the mass of men believe thus and so. If you please, we are not baptised unto kings, princes, or even unto the mass of men, but unto Christ and unto God himself; neither are we called kings, princes or common folk, but Christians. No one shall and can command the soul, unless he can show it the way to heaven; but this no man can do, only God. Therefore in matters which concern the salvation of souls nothing but God's Word shall be taught and accepted.

Again, consummate fools though they are, they must confess that they have no power over souls. For no human being can kill a soul or make it alive, conduct it to heaven or hell. And if they will not believe us in this, Christ indeed will certify strongly enough to it, since He says in
Matt. 10:28 Matthew x, "Fear not them which kill the body and after that have power to do naught; but rather fear Him Who after He has killed the body has power to condemn to hell." I consider that here it is sufficiently clear that the soul is taken out of all human hands and is placed under the power of God alone. Now tell me, how much wit is there in the head of him who imposes commandments where he has no power at all? Who would not regard one as insane if he commanded the moon to shine when he desired it? How fitting it would be if the Leipzigers would impose laws on us Wittenbergers, or again, if we in Wittenberg would lay laws on those in Leipzig. They would certainly send the law-makers a thank-offering of hellebore[1] to clear the brain and cure the snuffles. Nevertheless, our emperors and wise princes continue to permit pope, bishops and sophists to lead them on, one blind man leading the other, to command their subjects to believe,

[1] Among the ancients hellebore was considered a cure for insanity.

without God's Word, whatever they please, and still would be known as Christian princes.[1] God help us!

Besides, we can understand how any authority shall and may act only where it can see, know, judge, change and convert. For what kind of judge would he be who should blindly judge matters which he neither heard nor saw? Tell me, how can a man see, know, judge, condemn and change hearts? This is reserved for God alone, as Psalm vii says, "God trieth the heart and reins"; likewise, "The Lord shall judge the people"; and Acts xv, "God knoweth the hearts"; and, Jeremiah xvii, "Wicked and unsearchable is the human heart; who can know it? I the Lord, who search the heart and reins." A court ought and must be quite certain and clear about everything, if it is to pass sentence. But the thoughts and intents of the heart can be known to no one but God; therefore it is useless and impossible to command or compel any one by force to believe one thing or another. It must be taken hold of in a different way; force cannot accomplish it. And I am surprised at the great fools, since they themselves all say, De occultis non judicat ecclesia,—the Church does not judge secret things. If the spiritual rule of the Church governs only public matters, how dare the senseless secular power judge and control such a secret, spiritual, hidden matter as faith?

Ps. 7:9
Ps. 7:8
Acts 15:8
Jer. 17:9 f.

Furthermore, every man is responsible for his own faith, and he must see to it for himself that he believes rightly. As little as another can go to hell or heaven for me, so little can he believe or disbelieve for me; and as little as he can open or shut heaven or hell for me, so little can he drive me to faith or unbelief. Since, then, belief or unbelief is a matter of every one's conscience, and since this is no lessening of the secular power, the latter should be content and attend to its own affairs and permit men to believe one thing or another, as they are able and willing, and constrain no one by force. For faith is a free work,

[1] See above, p. 230.

to which no one can be forced.[1] Nay, it is a divine work, done in the Spirit, certainly not a matter which outward authority should compel or create. Hence arises the well-known saying, found also in Augustine,[2] "No one can or ought be constrained to believe."

Besides, the blind, wretched folk do not see how utterly hopeless and impossible a thing they are attempting. For no matter how much they fret and fume, they cannot do more than make the people obey them by word and deed; the heart they cannot constrain, though they wear themselves out trying. For the proverb is true, "Thoughts are free." Why then would they constrain people to believe from the heart, when they see that it is impossible? In this way they compel weak consciences to lie, to deny, and to say what they do not believe in their hearts, and they load themselves down with dreadful alien[3] sins. For all the lies and false confessions which such weak consciences utter fall back upon him who compels them. It were far better, if their subjects erred, simply to let them err, than that they should constrain them to lie and to say what is not in their hearts; neither is it right to defend evil with what is worse.

Would you like to know why God ordains that the temporal princes must offend so frightfully? I will tell you. God has given them over to a perverse mind and will make an end of them, as well as of the spiritual nobles. For my ungracious lords, the pope and the bishops, should be bishops and preach God's Word; this they leave undone and are become temporal princes, and govern with laws

Rom. 1:28
Jer. 30:11
Amos 9:8

---

[1] "This have I frequently done; if people from another principality came to me and asked me what attitude they should take on this point (the Lord's Supper), I have asked them whether they were convinced that God's Word and the truth demanded the use of the two kinds, and not of the one. If they then wavered, and wanted first to ask me and learn from me, I was not willing to advise them to take it in the two kinds, but dismissed them and told them to learn to become sure of the truth." Weimar Ed., xxxviii, 125. Cf. Völker, Toleranz u. Intoleranz im Zeitalter der Reformation, p. 45.

[2] Contra litteras Petiliani, ii, 184 (Migne, xliii, 315).

[3] Cf. Vol. I, p. 91; and Vol. II, p. 364.

which concern only life and property. How thoroughly they have turned things upside down! Inwardly they ought to be ruling souls by God's Word; hence outwardly they rule castles, cities, land and people and torture souls with unspeakable outrages. Similarly, the temporal lords should rule land and people outwardly; this they do not do. All they can do is to flay and scrape, put tax on tax, tribute on tribute, let loose now a bear, now a wolf. Besides this, there is no justice, fidelity or truth to be found among them; what they do would be beneath robbers and knaves, and their temporal rule has sunk quite as low as that of the spiritual tyrants. Hence God also perverts their minds, that they rush on in their senselessness and would establish a spiritual rule over souls, as the others would establish a temporal rule, in order that they may contentedly burden themselves with alien sins, and with God's and all men's hate, until they go under with bishops, priests and monks, one knave with the other. Then they lay all the blame on the Gospel, and instead of doing penance, blaspheme God and say that our preaching has brought about what their perverse wickedness has merited and still unceasingly merits, as the Romans did when they were destroyed.[1] Here then you have God's decree regarding the high and mighty. But they are not to believe it, lest this severe decree of God be hindered by their repentance.

The Meaning of Paul's and Peter's Words Rom. 13:1 1 Pet. 2:13

You reply, But Paul said in Romans xiii, "Every soul shall be subject to power and authority," and Peter says, "We should be subject to every ordinance of man." I answer, That is just what I want! These sayings are in my favor. St. Paul speaks of authority and power. Now, you have just heard that no one but God can have authority over souls. Hence Paul cannot be speaking of any obedience except where there can be corresponding authority. From this it follows that he does not speak of faith,

[1] Augustine wrote his City of God to prove that the fall of Rome in 410 was not due to Christianity.

and does not say that secular authority should have the right to command faith, but he is speaking of external goods, and that these are to be set in order and controlled on earth. This his words also clearly indicate, when he prescribes the limits to both authority and obedience, and says, "Render to every one his dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom; honor to whom honor; fear to whom fear." You see, temporal obedience and power apply only externally to tribute, custom, honor and fear. Likewise when he says, "The power is not a terror to good, but to evil works," he again limits the power, so that it is to have the mastery not over faith or the Word of God, but over evil works.

Rom. 13:7

Rom. 13:4

This is what St. Peter also desires, when he says, "Ordinance of man." Human ordinance cannot possibly extend its authority to heaven and over souls, but belongs only to earth, to the external intercourse of men with each other, where men can see, know, judge, sentence, punish and acquit. Christ Himself made this nice distinction and summed it all up briefly when He said, "Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." If, then, imperial power extended to God's kingdom and power, and were not something by itself, He would not thus have made it a separate thing. For, as was said, the soul is not under Cæsar's power; he can neither teach nor guide it, neither kill it nor make it alive, neither bind it nor loose it, neither judge it nor condemn it, neither hold it nor release it, which he must do had he power to command it and impose laws upon it; but over life, goods and honor he indeed has this right, for such things are under his authority.

1 Pet. 2:13

Matt. 22:21

David, too, stated this long ago in one of his short sayings when he says in Psalm cxv, "The heavens hath he given to the Lord of heaven; but the earth hath he given to the children of men." That is, over what is on earth and belongs to the temporal, earthly kingdom, man has authority from God, but that which belongs to the

Ps. 115:16

heavenly eternal kingdom is entirely under the heavenly Lord. Nor does Moses forget this when he says in Genesis i, "God said, Let us make man to rule over the beasts of the earth, over the fish in the waters, over the birds in the air." There only external rule is ascribed to men. And, in short, this is the meaning, as St. Peter says, Acts v, "We must obey God rather than men." Thereby he clearly sets a limit to worldly government, for if we had to do all that worldly government demands it would be to no purpose to say, "We must obey God rather than men."

Gen. 1:26

Acts 5:29

If then your prince or temporal lord commands you to hold with the pope, to believe this or that, or commands you to give up certain books, you should say, It does not befit Lucifer to sit by the side of God. Dear Lord, I owe you obedience with life and goods; command me within the limits of your power on earth, and I will obey. But if you command me to believe, and to put away books, I will not obey; for in this case you are a tyrant and overreach yourself, and command where you have neither right nor power, etc. Should he take your property for this, and punish such disobedience, blessed are you. Thank God that you are worthy to suffer for the sake of the divine Word, and let him rave, fool that he is. He will meet his judge. For I tell you, if you do not resist him but give him his way, and let him take your faith or your books, you have really denied God.

The Order Against the New Testament

1 Pet. 4: 14, 16
Acts 5:41

Let me illustrate. In Meissen, Bavaria, in the Mark,[1] and other places, the tyrants have issued an order that the New Testaments be delivered to the courts everywhere. In this case their subjects ought not deliver a page or a letter, at risk of their salvation. For whoever does so, delivers Christ into Herod's hands, since they act as murderers of Christ, like Herod. But if their houses are ordered searched and books or goods taken by force, they

[1] For Meissen, see SEIDEMANN, Erläuterungen, p. 51; for Bavaria, see WINTER, Schicksale der evangelischen Lehre, ii, 189; for the Mark, see A. MÜLLER, Gesch. d. Reform. in der M. Brandenburg, p. 128 f.

should suffer it to be done. Outrage is not to be resisted, but endured, yet they should not sanction it, nor serve or obey or follow by moving foot or finger. For such tyrants act as wordly princes should act,—"wordly" princes they are; but the world is God's enemy. Therefore they must also do what is opposed to God, and in accord with the world, that they may by no means lose all honor, but remain worldly princes. Hence do not wonder that they rage and mock at the Gospel; they must live up to their name and title.

You must know that from the beginning of the world a wise prince is a rare bird indeed[1]; still more so a pious prince. They are usually the greatest fools or the worst knaves on earth; therefore one must constantly expect the worst from them and look for little good from them, especially in divine matters, which concern the salvation of souls. They are God's jailers and hangmen, and His divine wrath needs them to punish the wicked and preserve outward peace. Our God is a great Lord, and therefore must have such noble, honorable and rich hangmen and beadles, and desires that they shall have riches, honor and fear, in full and plenty, from every one. It pleases His divine will that we call His hangmen gracious lords, fall at their feet and be subject to them in all humility, so long as they do not ply their trade too far and desire to become shepherds instead of hangmen. If a prince becomes wise, pious or a Christian, it is one of the great wonders, and one of the most precious tokens of divine grace upon that land. For the usual course is according to
Isa. 3:4 the saying in Isaiah iii, "I will give children to be their princes and babes[2] shall rule over them," and in Hosea xiii,
Hosea 13:11 "I will give thee a king in my anger and take him away in my wrath." The world is too wicked, and does not deserve to have many wise and pious princes. Frogs need storks.[3]

Again you say, Temporal power does not force men to

[1] See p. 184. [2] Luther says, M a u l a f f e n, jackanapes.
[3] Cf. the well-known fable of Æsop.

believe, but simply prevents them from being misled by false doctrine; otherwise how could heretics be prevented from preaching? I answer, This the bishops should do, to whom, and not to the princes, such duty is entrusted. Heresy can never be prevented by force. That must be taken hold of in a different way, and must be opposed and dealt with otherwise than with the sword. Here God's Word must strive; if that does not accomplish the end it will remain unaccomplished through secular power, though it fill the world with blood. Heresy is a spiritual matter, which no iron can strike, no fire burn, no water drown. God's Word alone avails here, as Paul says, II Corinthians x, "Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to destroy every counsel and high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

The Suppression of Heresy

2 Cor. 10:4

Moreover, faith and heresy are never so strong as when men oppose them by sheer force, without God's Word. For men count it certain that such force is for a wrong cause and is directed against the right, since it proceeds without God's Word, and does not know how to further its cause except by force, just as the brute beasts do. For even in secular affairs force can be used only after the wrong has been legally condemned. How much less possible is it to act with force, without justice and God's Word, in these high, spiritual matters! See, therefore, what fine, shrewd nobles they are. They would drive out heresy, and set about it in such a way that they only strengthen the opposition, make themselves suspected, and justify the heretics. Friend, would you drive out heresy, then you must find a plan to tear it first of all from the heart and altogether to turn men's wills away from it; force will not accomplish this, but only strengthen the heresy. What avails it to strengthen heresy in the heart and to weaken only its outward expression, and to force the tongue to lie? God's Word, however, enlightens the hearts; and so all heresies and errors perish of themselves from the heart.

Such overpowering of heresy the prophet Isaiah pro-
Isa. 11:4 claimed in his eleventh chapter when he said, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and slay the wicked with the breath of His lips." You see, if the wicked is to be smitten and converted, it is accomplished by the mouth. In short, such princes and tyrants do not know that to fight against heresy is to fight against the devil, who fills men's hearts with error, as Paul says in Ephesians
Eph. 6:12 vi, "We fight not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness, with the rulers of the darkness of this world." Therefore, as long as the devil is not repelled and driven from the heart, it matters as little to him that I destroy his vessels with fire or sword, as it would if I fought lightning with a straw. Job bore abundant witness to this,
Job 41:27 when in his forty-first chapter he said that the devil esteemeth iron as straw and fears no power on earth. We learn it also from experience, for although all the Jews and heretics were burned, yet no one has been or will be convinced and converted thereby.

Nevertheless such a world as this deserves such princes, none of whom do their duty. The bishops are to leave the Word of God alone and not rule souls by it, but command the worldly princes to rule them with the sword. The worldly princes, in their turn, are to permit usury, theft, adultery, murder, and other evil works, and themselves do them; and then allow the bishops to punish with the ban. Thus they turn things topsy-turvy, and rule souls with iron and the body with bans, so that worldly princes rule in a spiritual, and spiritual princes in a wordly way. What else does the devil have to do on earth than thus to play the fool and hold carnival with his folk? These are our Christian princes, who defend the faith and devour the Turk. Fine fellows, to be sure, whom we may well trust to accomplish something by such refined wisdom, namely, break their necks and plunge land and people into suffering and want.

I would, however, in all fidelity advise the blinded folk

to take heed to the short saying in Psalm cvii, "Effundit contemptum super principes."[1] I swear unto you by God that, if through your fault this little text becomes effective against you, you are lost, though every one of you be as mighty as the Turk; and your snorting and raving will help you nothing. A large part has already come true. For there are very few princes that are not reckoned fools or knaves. That is because they show themselves to be such; the common man is learning to think, and the prince's scourge, which God calls contemptum, is gathering force among the mob and with the common man. I fear there is no way to stop it, unless the princes conduct themselves in a princely manner and begin again to rule reasonably and thoroughly. Men ought not, men cannot, men will not suffer your tyranny and presumption much longer. Dear princes and lords, be wise and guide yourselves accordingly. God will no longer tolerate it. The world is no longer what it was when you hunted and drove the people like so much game. Therefore drop your outrage and force, and remember to deal justly and let God's Word have its course, as it will and must and shall, nor will you prevent it. If there is heresy abroad, let it be overcome, as is proper, with God's Word. But if you will keep on brandishing the sword, take heed lest there come one who shall bid you sheath it, and that not in God's name. Ps. 107:40

But should you ask, Since there is to be no secular sword among Christians, how are they to be ruled outwardly? There certainly must be authority also among Christians. I answer, Among Christians there shall and can be no authority; but all are alike subject to one another, as Paul says in Romans xii, "Each shall count the other his superior," and Peter in I Peter v, "All of you be subject one to another." This is also what Christ means in Luke xiv, "When you are bidden to a wedding sit down in the lowest Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 5:5; Luke 14:10

[1] "He poureth contempt upon princes."

room." There is no superior among Christians, but Christ Himself and Christ alone. And what kind of authority can there be where all are equal and have the same right, power, possession, and honor, and no one desires to be the other's superior, but each the other's inferior? One could not establish authority where there are such people, even if one would, since their character and nature will not permit them to have superiors, for no one is willing or able to be the superior. But where there are no such people, there are no real Christians.

Priests and Bishops, Servants

What, then, are the priests and bishops? I answer, Their government is not one of authority or power, but a service and an office; for they are neither higher nor better than other Christians. Therefore they should not impose any law or decree on others without their will and consent; their rule consists in nothing else than in dealing with God's Word, leading Christians by it and overcoming heresy by its means. For, as was said, Christians can be ruled by nothing but by God's Word. For Christians must be ruled in faith, not by outward works. Faith, however, can come through no word of man, but only through the Word of God, as Paul says in Romans x, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Those who do not believe are not Christians, do not belong to Christ's kingdom, but to the worldly kingdom, and are constrained and ruled by the sword and by outward rule. Christians do of themselves, without constraint, every good thing, and find God's Word alone sufficient for them. Of this, however, I have written frequently and at length elsewhere.[1]

Rom. 10:17

PART THREE

Princes' Duty to Serve

Now that we know the limits of secular authority, it is time also to inquire how a prince should use it; for the sake of those who fain would be Christian princes and lords,

[1] Cf. Treatise on Good Works, I, 184 ff., and Treatise on Christian Liberty, II, 312 ff.

and desire to enter the life beyond, of whom there are very few. For Christ Himself describes the nature of temporal princes in Luke xxii, when he says, "The worldly princes exercise lordship, and they that are chief exercise authority." For if they are born princes or chosen to office, they think only that it is their right to be served and to rule with power. He who would be a Christian prince certainly must lay aside the intention to rule and to use force. For cursed and condemned is every kind of life lived and sought for selfish profit and good; cursed are all works not done in love. But they are done in love when they are directed with all one's heart, not toward selfish pleasure, profit, honor, ease and salvation, but toward the profit, honor and salvation of others.

Luke 22:25

I will say nothing here of secular affairs and of the laws of government, for that is a large subject and there are too many law-books already; although, if a prince himself is not wiser than his jurists, and does not know more than is in the law-books, he will surely rule according to the saying in Proverbs xxviii, "A prince that wanteth understanding will oppress many with injustice." No matter how good and equitable the laws are, they all make exceptions of cases of necessity,[1] in which they cannot be enforced. Therefore a prince must have the law in hand as firmly as the sword, and decide in his own mind when and where the law must be applied strictly or with moderation, so that reason may always control all law and be the highest law and rule over all laws. A housefather who, although he appoints a definite time and amount of

Princes Must Depend on God

Prov. 28:16

[1] "Although it is beneficial to public safety that something be observed in the majority of cases, it happens in some cases that it is highly harmful. Therefore, because the law-maker cannot foresee all individual cases, he proposes a law in accordance with what happens in most cases, directing his intention to the common good. Therefore, if a case arises in which the observance of such a law is harmful to the common welfare, it must not be observed. . . . The right to interpret what is good and what is not good for the State belongs to the princes alone, who because of cases of this kind have authority to dispense from observing the law. But if the danger be sudden, so that it permits of no delay sufficient to allow one to go to the superior, necessity itself has dispensation joined to it, because necessity is not subject to the law."—THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa*, i, 2, 96, 6.

work and food for his servants and children, must yet reserve the power to change or omit such regulations if his servants happen to be sick, imprisoned, detained, deceived, or otherwise hindered, and not deal as severely with the sick as with the well. I say this in order that men may not think it sufficient and an excellent thing if they follow the written law or the legal advisers; more than that is required.

What should a prince do, if he is not sufficiently wise, and must follow the directions of jurists and law books? I answer, For this reason I said that the position of a prince is a perilous one, and if he is not wise enough to master both the law and his advisers, the saying of Solomon is fulfilled, "Woe to the land whose king is a child." Solomon recognized this; therefore he despaired of all law, even of that which Moses, through God, had prescribed for him and of all his princes and counselors, and turned to God Himself and prayed to Him for a wise heart to rule the people. A prince must follow this example and proceed with fear; he must depend neither upon dead books nor upon living heads, but cling solely to God, pray without ceasing to Him, and ask for a right understanding, above all books and masters, wisely to rule his subjects. Therefore I know of no law to prescribe for a prince, but will simply instruct him what the attitude of his heart and mind ought to be with respect to all laws, counsels, decisions and actions, so that if he govern himself thereby God will surely grant him the power to carry out all laws, counsels, and actions in a proper and godly way.

Eccl. 10:16

1 Kings 3:9

Government for the People

I. He must consider his subjects and rightly dispose his heart toward them in this matter. He does this if he applies his whole mind to making himself useful and serviceable to them, and does not think, "Land and people are mine; I will do as I please"; but thus, "I belong to land and people; I must do what is profitable and good for them. My concern must be, not how I may rule and be haughty, but how they may be protected and defended by a good

peace." And he should picture Christ to himself, and say, "Behold, Christ the chief Ruler came and served me, sought not to have power, profit and honor from me, but only considered my need, and did all He could that I might have power, profit and honor from Him and through Him. I will do the same, not seek mine own advantage in my subjects, but their advantage, and thus serve them by my office, protect them, give them audience and support, that they, and not I, may have the benefit and profit by it." Thus a prince should in his heart empty himself of his power and authority, and interest himself in the need of his subjects, dealing with it as though it were his own need. Thus Christ did unto us; and these are the proper works of Christian love.

You say, Who then would be a prince? For that would make the position of a prince the worst on earth, full of trouble, labor and sorrow. Where would there be room for the princely pleasures, such as dancing, hunting, racing, gaming, and similar worldly enjoyments? I answer, We are not prescribing now how a temporal prince shall live, but how a temporal prince shall be a Christian, in order that he also may reach heaven. Who does not know that a prince is a rare bird in heaven?[1] I do not speak because I have any hope that princes will give heed, but because there might possibly be one of them who would fain be a Christian and would like to know what he ought to do. For I am sure that God's Word will neither turn nor bend to princes; but the princes must bend themselves according to it. It is enough for me to point out that it is not impossible for a prince to be a Christian, though it is a rare thing and surrounded with difficulties. If they would so manage that their dancing, hunting and racing were done without injury to their subjects, and if they would otherwise conduct their office in love toward them, God would not be so hard as to begrudge them their dancing, hunting and racing. But it would follow of itself that, if they served

[1] See above, p. 258, and Vol. II, p. 163.

and cared for their subjects as their office requires, full many a fine dance, hunt, race and game would have to be abandoned.

Counselors not to be Trusted

II. He must beware of the high and mighty and of his counselors, and so conduct himself toward them that he despise none, and trust none enough to leave everything to him.[1] For God cannot tolerate either. He once spake by an ass; therefore no man is to be despised, no matter how humble he be. On the other hand, He permitted the highest angel to fall from heaven; therefore no man is to be trusted, no matter how wise, holy and great he is, but one must give a hearing to all and wait to see through which one of them God will speak and act. For the greatest harm done at court is when a prince enslaves his mind to the high and mighty and to the flatterers, and does not look into things himself; since, when a prince fails and plays the fool, not only one person is affected, but land and people must bear the result of such foolishness. Therefore a prince should bestow only so much trust and power upon his rulers that he will still keep the reins of government in his own hand. He must keep his eyes open and give attention, and, like Jehoshaphat, ride through the land and observe everywhere how the government and the law is administered. In this way he will learn for himself that one must not implicitly trust any man. For you have no right to think that another will interest himself in you and in your land so deeply as you yourself, unless he be filled with the Spirit and be a good Christian. The natural man does not do it. Since, however, you do not know whether he is a Christian or how long he will remain one, you cannot safely depend on him.

Num. 22:28

Rev. 12:9

2 Chron. 19:4 ff.

Beware especially of those who say, "Gracious lord, why does your grace not trust me more? Who is so willing to serve your grace," etc.? Such an one is certainly not guileless, but desires to be lord in the country and make a jackanapes[2] of you. If he were a true and pious Christian

[1] See above, p. 200.

[2] See above, p. 258.

he would be quite willing that you should entrust him with nothing, and would praise you for keeping so careful a watch on him; for he acts in accordance with God's will and therefore he is willing, and can bear it, to have his acts brought to the light by you or any one else, as Christ says in John iii, "He that doeth well cometh to the light, John 3:21 that his deeds may be made manifest, for they are wrought in God." The former, however, would blind your eyes, and act under cover of darkness, as Christ also says in the same place, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, John 3:20 lest his deeds should be punished." Therefore, beware of him. And if he complain of it, say, "Friend, I do thee no wrong; God is not willing that I trust myself or any other man; find fault with Him, then, because He will have it so, or that He has not made you more than human; although, even if you were an angel, since Lucifer indeed was not to be trusted, I would not trust you completely, for we should trust God alone."

Let no prince think that he shall fare better than David, who is an example to all princes. He had so wise a counselor, named Ahithophel, that the text says, "The counsel 2 Sam. 16:28 which Ahithophel counselled availed as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God." Nevertheless he fell, and sank so low that he sought to betray, kill and destroy David his own lord. Then David had to learn that no 2 Sam. 17:1 ff. man is to be trusted. Why do you suppose God permitted such a horrible example to occur, and to be recorded, if not in order to warn the princes and lords against the most perilous misfortune that may befall them, so that they might trust no one. For it is most deplorable when flatterers reign at court, or when the prince depends on others, puts himself in their hands, and lets every one do as he will.

You say, perchance, If no one is to be trusted, how will one rule land and people? I answer, You should entrust and take the venture, but you should not trust and depend save on God alone. You must certainly entrust the offices

to some one and take a chance with him; but you should not trust him otherwise than as one who may fail you and whom you must watch with unfailing vigilance; as a driver has confidence in the horses and wagon he drives, yet does not let them go their own way, but holds reins and lash in his hand and does not sleep. Remember the old proverbs, which are the sure fruits of experience: "A careful master makes a good horse," and "The master's footsteps make a fruitful field,"—that is, if the master does not look after things himself, but depends upon counselors and servants, things never go right. God also will have it so, and causes it to happen, in order that the lords may be driven of necessity to fulfil their office themselves, as everyone must fulfil his calling and every creature do its work; otherwise the lords will become fatted pigs and a worthless lot, of no profit to any one but themselves.

Punishing Evil Doers and Waging War

III. He must take heed that he deal justly with evil doers. Here he must be very wise and prudent to mete out punishment without injuring others. I know no better example of this than David again. He had a captain, Joab by name, who played two wicked pranks in that he treacherously murdered two loyal captains, whereby he justly merited death twice over; yet David did not put him to death during his lifetime, but commanded his son Solomon without fail to do so, because he could not punish him without great injury and disturbance. A prince must punish the wicked in such a way that he does not step on the dish while picking up the spoon, and for the sake of one man's head plunge land and people into want and fill the land with widows and orphans. Therefore he must not obey the counselors and fire-eaters who incite and provoke him to begin war and say, "What, must we suffer such insults and injustice?" He is a poor Christian indeed who for the sake of a single castle would make an armed camp of the whole land. In brief, here one must hold by the proverb, "He cannot rule who cannot wink at faults." Let this, therefore, be his rule: Where wrong

2 Sam. 3: 27; 20:10

1 Kings 2:5 f.

cannot be punished without greater wrong, there let him waive his rights, however just. He must not regard his own injury, but the wrong which others must suffer as a consequence of the penalty he imposes. For what have the many women and children done that they should be made widows and orphans in order that you may avenge yourself on an idle tongue or a wicked hand which has injured you?

You ask, But shall not a prince go to war, nor his subjects follow him into battle? I answer, That is a far-reaching question, but let me answer it very briefly. To act here as a Christian, I say, a prince should not wage war against his overlord—the king, emperor or other liege—but should let him who takes take. For one must not resist the government with force, but only with knowledge of the truth; if it is influenced by it, well; if not, you are innocent, and suffer wrong for God's sake. But if your opponent is your equal, your inferior, or of a foreign government, you should first offer him justice and peace, as Moses taught the children of Israel. If he is unwilling, then use your best strategy and defend yourself by force against force, as Moses well describes it all in Deuteronomy xx. In doing this you must not consider your own interests and how you may remain lord, but your subjects, to whom you owe help and protection, that all may be done in love. For, since your entire land is in peril, you must make the venture, so that with God's help all may not be lost; and if you cannot prevent some from becoming widows and orphans, as a consequence of this, you must nevertheless prevent it that all go to ruin and there be nothing left but widows and orphans. Deut. 20:10 ff.

In this matter subjects are in duty bound to follow and risk life and property for the cause. For in such a case one must risk his property and himself for the sake of the other. And in such a war it is a Christian act and an act of love confidently to kill, rob, and pillage the enemy, and to do everything that can injure him until one has

conquered him according to the methods of war. Only, one must beware of sin, not violate wives and virgins, and when victory comes, offer mercy and peace to those who surrender and humble themselves. Therefore in such a case let the saying hold true, "God helps those who help themselves." So Abraham did when he smote the four kings, as Genesis xiv tells us, when he certainly caused great slaughter and showed little mercy until he conquered them. Such happenings must be considered as sent of God, that He may now and then cleanse the land and drive out the knaves.

Gen. 14:14 ff.

But when a prince is in the wrong, are his people bound to follow him then too? I answer, No, for it is no one's duty to do wrong; we ought to obey God Who desires the right, rather than men. How is it, when the subjects do not know whether the prince is in the right or not? I answer, As long as they cannot know, nor find out by any possible means, they may obey without peril to their souls. For in such a case one must apply the law of Moses, when he writes in Exodus xxi, that a murderer who has unknowingly and involuntarily killed a man shall be delivered by fleeing to a city of refuge and by the judgment of the congregation. For whichever side is defeated, whether it be in the right or in the wrong, must accept it as a punishment from God; but whichever side wars and wins, in such ignorance, must regard their battle as though one fell from the roof and killed another, and leave the matter to God. For it is the same to God whether He deprives you of goods and life by a just lord or by an unjust. You are His creature, and He can do with you as He will—if only your conscience is clear. God Himself thus excuses Abimelech in Genesis xx, when he took Abraham's wife, not because he had done right, but because he had not known that she was Abraham's wife.

Acts 5:29

Ex. 21:13 Num. 35:12

Gen. 20:6

IV. We come to what really should be foremost, and of which we spoke above.[1] A prince must act also in a

[1] See p. 264.

Christian way toward his God, that is, he must subject himself to Him in entire confidence and pray for wisdom to rule well, as Solomon did. But of faith and trust in God I have written so much elsewhere that it is not necessary to say more here. Therefore we will close by saying briefly that a prince's duty is fourfold: First, that toward God consists in true confidence and in sincere prayer; second, that toward his subjects consists in love and Christian service; third, that toward his counselors and rulers consists in an open mind and unfettered judgment; fourth, that toward evil doers consists in proper zeal and firmness. Then his state is right, outwardly and inwardly, pleasing to God and to the people. But he must expect much envy and sorrow,—the cross will soon rest on the shoulders of such a ruler.

1 Kings 3:9

Finally, in addition, I must make answer to those who dispute about restitution, that is, about the returning of goods unlawfully acquired. This is a common task of the temporal sword, and much has been written concerning it, and there has been much hairsplitting in the discussion of it. I will put it all in a few words, and dispose at one and the same time of all these laws and the quibbles that follow. No more definite law can be found on this subject than the law of love. In the first place, when such a case is brought before you, in which one is to make restitution to another, the matter is soon settled if they are both Christians; for neither will withhold what belongs to the other, nor will either of them demand that it be returned. If only one is a Christian, namely, the one to whom restitution is to be made, it is again easy to settle, for he does not care whether it never be returned. The same is true if the one who is to make restitution is a Christian; he will do so. But whether one is a Christian or not a Christian, you must decide the restitution as follows. If the debtor is poor and unable to make restitution, and the other party is not poor, then you should let the law of love pre-

Restitution and the Law of Love

vail and acquit the debtor. For, according to the law of love, the other party, too, owes it to him to relinquish the debt, and if necessary to give him something besides. But if the debtor is not poor, then let him restore as much as he can, all, half, a third, or a fourth of it, provided that you leave him enough to assure a house, food and clothing for himself, his wife and children; for this you would owe him if you could give it, much less ought you to take it away now, since you do not need it and he cannot do without it.

But if neither is a Christian, or if either is unwilling to be judged by the law of love, you may ask them to call in another judge, and announce to them that they are acting against God and the law of nature,[1] even though they may obtain absolute justice through human law. For nature, like love, teaches that I should do as I would be done by. Matt. 7:12 Therefore I cannot strip any one else, even if I have the very best right to do so, if I myself am not willing to be stripped of my goods, but as I would that another should relinquish his right to me in such an instance, even so should I also relinquish my rights. Thus one should deal with all property unlawfully held, whether in public or private, that love and the law of nature may always prevail. For when you judge according to love, you will easily decide and adjust matters without any law-books. But when you ignore love and natural law, you will never succeed in pleasing God, though you have devoured all the law-books and jurists; they will only cause you to err, the more you depend on them. A good and just decision must not and cannot be given out of books, but must come from a free mind, as though there were not a single book. Such a free decision, however, is given by love and by the law of nature, of which the reason is full; but out of the books

[1] "The law of nature is the common opinion to which we all as men equally agree, and which God has engraved upon the heart of every one."—This "law of nature" played a large part in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and in Luther's own thought.—MELANCHTHON, Loci Communes (1521), de lege. Ed. Plitt-Kolde, p. 111.

come rigid and vague judgments. Of this I will give you an example.

An incident of this sort is told of Duke Charles of Burgundy.[1] A certain nobleman took an enemy prisoner, whereupon the prisoner's wife came to redeem her husband. The nobleman promised to give her back her husband provided she would lie with him. The woman was virtuous, yet desired to set her husband free; so she goes and asks her husband whether she shall do this thing in order to set him free. The husband desired to be set free and to save his life, and gives his wife permission. After the nobleman had lain with the wife, he had the husband beheaded the next day and gave him to her a corpse. She laid the whole case before Duke Charles, who summoned the nobleman and commanded him to marry the woman. When the wedding day was over, he had the man beheaded, put the woman in possession of his property, and raised her again to honor. Thus he punished the crime in a princely way.

You see, such a decision no pope, nor jurist, and no law-book could have given him; but it sprang from untrammeled reason, above the law in the books, and is so excellent that every one must approve of it and find the justice of it written in his own heart. St. Augustine in his Sermon of the Lord on the Mount[2] writes in the same fashion. Therefore we should keep written laws subject to reason, whence indeed they have welled as from the spring of justice, and not make the spring dependent on its rivulets, nor take reason captive to the letter.

---

[1] Charles the Bold (1467–77). The story is also quoted by Melanchthon (Corpus Ref., xx, 531).

[2] In the Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount (Migne, xxxiv, 1254).

LUTHER'S WRITINGS

AGAINST

EMSER

1521

I. TO THE LEIPZIG GOAT

1521

INTRODUCTION

LUTHER'S CONTROVERSY WITH EMSER

JEROME EMSER, son of a Swabian nobleman, whose escutcheon—the head of a goat topping a helmet and adorning a shield—he proudly placed on the title-page of his books, was secretary to Duke George of Saxony at Leipzig, and for his faithful services to his master had received the award of two prebends, at Dresden and at Meissen, with residence at Dresden. His study of law and theology had been pursued at Tübingen and Basel; as private secretary to Cardinal Raymund von Gurk he had traveled extensively in Germany and Italy. Before he entered the service of Duke George he obtained the master's degree at Erfurt and lectured at the university for a season, where, according to a statement of his own, Luther himself was among his students.[1]

When Luther in 1518, shortly after the publication of his XCV Theses, came to Dresden in company with John Lang, vicar of the Augustinians in Saxony, on matters pertaining to the order, Emser insisted on their attendance at a social gathering at his home. It was not altogether pleasant; one of the guests denounced Luther's stand on indulgences and Luther gained the impression that the insult had been prearranged. When Luther and Emser met again in Leipzig, six months later, Emser asserted vehemently that there was no sinister intention in his invitation at Dresden. A third meeting of the two occurred after another interval of six months, during the disputation at Leipzig, when those words fell from Luther's lips which are explained at length in the second of the writings here translated.[2]

It was Luther's public utterance on July 5, 1519, in the course of his debate with Eck at Leipzig, that not all the teachings of Hus, condemned by the Council of Constance, were heretical, which gave rise to the controversy of which the three writings of Luther herewith given are a part. The very same month two of the clergy in Prague, John Poduska and Wenzel Rozdalowsky, wrote to Luther expressing their approval and assuring him that many prayers were rising for him night and day in Bohemia. Though Luther did not see these letters until October, their contents were known early in August. Directly upon his return to Dresden, Emser, on August 13th, wrote a letter in Latin to the administrator of the archbishopric of Prague, the provost of Leitmeritz, John Zack, which he immediately pub-

[1] "I would advise Luther to go to Emser's school a little longer, even as he did sixteen years ago at Erfurt, and first heard from my lips John Reuchlin's comedy 'Sergius.' Indeed, he has thoroughly mastered that monk's knavery."—Emser's Quadruplica; Enders, Luther und Emser, ii, 179.

[2] See pp. 289 ff.

lished, in which he seemingly defends Luther against the boasting of the Hussites that they had found a patron in him, and pities him if he would rely upon the damnable prayers of heretics. This alternation of defence and pity, leaving the reader quite in doubt as to Luther's position, together with a fulsome praise of Eck, and perhaps the memory of Dresden as well, roused Luther to an immediate reply, in Latin, which he addressed to "Wild-goat Emser," a designation caused by the coat of arms which graced the title-page of Emser's published letter.[1] This reply was unsparing with invective, yet revealed Luther's fortitude in his declared determination to stand by his statements made in Leipzig even if he should be stigmatized a Hussite.

Though Emser countered with a "Defence against Luther's Chase," [2] in which he declares that now "he begins to suspect who is the father of this child, that is to say, Luther's implacable hatred of the pope," namely, the fact that Luther and his order did not share in the profits of the sale of the indulgences, Luther did not deign to reply to such arguments; nor did he consider it necessary to notice Eck's assistance to his friend Emser.[3]

The next year, 1520, marked the appearance of the Open Letter to the Christian Nobility.[4] This caused Emser, who considered himself the chosen defender of the papacy, to renew the controversy in his elaborate Answer to the unchristian Book of the Augustinian Martin Luther addressed to the German Nobility.[5] Before it appeared, however, some one transmitted the first sheet to Luther, who decided upon an immediate rejoinder, even before the complete book was published. He was doubtless spurred on by his suspicion that Duke George was the real motive power back of Emser's pen. Fuel was added to the flame by the appearance of a Latin treatise against Luther by the Dominican Thomas Rhadinus, published in Rome in the month of August, 1520, and soon thereafter reprinted in Leipzig. Both Luther and Melanchthon were convinced that it was Emser's work, which opinion they never changed in spite of Emser's emphatic denial. So Luther, early in January, 1521, sent his greeting to the Leipzig goat, in the first of the writings here offered to the English reader. Its purpose is to assure Emser that he will not be permitted to remain on the arena without a battle. "Perhaps you are encouraged by the pope's bull to hope that I shall not dare to write again, so that you can remain on the field alone, fight without opposition or danger, and come out victorious with your pretensions. . . . Take notice, henceforth I will not remain silent, nor will I let you defile the Holy Scriptures with your goat's snout."

---

[1] Ad Aegocerotem Emseranum, Weimar Ed., ii, 655 ff.
[2] A venatione Aegocerotis assertio. See Weimar Ed., ii, 657.
[3] Ioannis Eckii pro Hieronymo Emser contra male sanam Luteri venationem responsio. Oecolampadius took up the cudgels in answer. See Weimar Ed., ii, 655; vii, 259.
[4] Vol. II, pp. 61 ff.
[5] Printed in full by Enders, L. u. E., i, 1 ff.

Emser replied at once, before his larger treatise appeared, addressing himself To the Wittenberg Bull. In his endeavor to discredit Luther he declares: "Three times I gave you a brotherly warning and begged you, for God's sake, to spare the poor folk to whom you are giving such great offence by this affair, and you gave your final answer in these words: 'Let the devil care! This thing was not begun for God's sake and shall not stop for God's sake!' "[1] We do not wonder at Luther's ire, in the heat of which he thrusts back immediately in the second of the writings here presented, the Reply to the Answer of the Leipzig Goat, in which he exposes this lie and explains the incident at Leipzig.

An interesting question in connection with this treatise is its dedication to H. E., probably the person who had sent Emser's tirade against the Wittenberg Bull to Luther. For the conjecture of Buchwald[2] that the initials stand for Hieronymus Emser, Luther playfully regarding his enemy against whom he writes as his friend to whom he dedicates his little treatise, is quite improbable and has not met with favor. Seidemann,[3] Enders,[4] and Thiele[5] unite in designating Haugold von Einsiedel as the friend whom Luther addressed, and explain his use of the initials by the fact that the Einsiedel domicile was under the jurisdiction of Duke George, Emser's friend and Luther's enemy.

Emser's main treatise in this controversy, entitled Against the unchristian Book of the Augustinian monk Martin Luther addressed to the German Nobility, came into the hands of the Wittenbergers in the beginning of February, 1521. Luther prepared a reply which was in print by the end of March. It is the Answer to the Superchristian, Superspiritual, and Superlearned Book of Goat Emser of Leipzig, the third of the treatises here offered in English dress.

In this reply Luther does not trouble to defend himself against all the attacks of Emser, who had put a large part of his book in the form of a dialogue, quoting sentence after sentence from the Address to the Nobility and introducing himself as speaking in opposition in each case. Luther goes straight to the fundamental difference between them, the sole authority of Holy Scripture in matters of faith and the right exposition of the Scripture according to its grammatical sense. Over against Emser's position, that he would fight with the sword—i. e., the word of Scripture—but that he would not permit it to remain in the scabbard of the word sense, but use the naked blade of the spiritual, secret sense, Luther, in the most important section of his Answer, under the subtitle "The Letter and the Spirit," utters the foundation principles of Protestant exegesis, a position

[1] Enders, L. u. E., ii 5.
[2] Berlin Ed., iv, 93.
[3] DeWette, Luthers Briefwechsel, vi, 492.
[4] Briefwechsel, iii, 79; L. u. E., ii, iii.
[5] Weimer Ed., vii, 267.

which was by no means new for him, being clearly discernible in the newly discovered commentary on the Romans from the years 1515–16.[1]

In an appendix to this treatise Luther also replies to the attacks of another opponent, the Strassburg friar, Thomas Murner, whom he terms a comrade of Emser because he likewise fortifies his case with tradition and not with Scripture. Of the thirty-two books he wrote against Luther not more than six or seven saw publication. Three of these had appeared in November and December, 1520; the first directed against Luther's Treatise on the New Testament, the second against The Papacy at Rome, and the third against the Open Letter to the Nobility. Luther at first thought it quite unnecessary to answer and finally decided to dispose of Murner by adding a few pages to his book against Emser, though he is less severe in his treatment of Murner: "I do not discover so many lies in you." Luther takes up only two points referred to in the first two of Murner's treatises; he defends the Church as a spiritual assembly against Murner's scoffing and opposes the interpretation of Matthew xvi : 18 as relating to the pope.

The subsequent stages of the controversy with Emser were barren of theological results. Emser's Quadruplica appeared promptly in answer to Luther, and some months later Luther replied, ironically granting a twofold priesthood as Emser desired on the basis of I Peter 2 : 9, but following this with the true explanation of the passage. Emser understood Luther's jesting so little that he came again with another pamphlet, accepting Luther's revocation and accusing him of gross inconsistency. Luther never replied. Every important publication of Luther thereafter called forth a disquisition from Emser's busy pen, only to be met with disdain by the great warrior. Emser's controversial activity was ended only by his sudden death at Dresden, November 8, 1527.

In the pamphlets and the treatise here given the reader will find a faithful portrait, with well-defined lights and shadows, of the controversial Luther. The brilliant and keen power of analysis, which penetrates to the core of a proposition without circumlocution or loss of time; the mastery and love of Scripture, which casts its glow upon every page; the broad knowledge of church history and patristic literature, which enables him to deliver blow for blow to an adversary whose chief pride is his ability to quote the fathers; the native humor, which never fails to restore his equilibrium when the "lies" and meannesses of his opponent arouse his ire; the style of warfare, which stamps him a child of his age and reminds of his heritage as a miner's son: they are all to be found in these writings, which gushed from his pen in incredible time, the longest requiring but several weeks between its inception and its appearance in print.

[1] See Ficker, Anfänge reformatorischer Bibelauslegung, I Bd, Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief, 1515–16: 1. Die Glosse; 2. Die Scholien, Leipzig, 1908. Ficker's discovery has been described for the American reader by Dr. M. Reu, Thirty-five Years of Luther Research, pp. 14 ff., 50.

One of the companion volumes for the reader ought to be Augustine's De spiritu et litera,[1] with which Luther was evidently thoroughly familiar. Striking passages in both Augustine's and Luther's discussion of the subject show remarkable similarity, without slavish dependence of the latter on the former. Luther was an Augustinian here,—in spirit as well as in name.

Literature.—The entire literature of the controversy in 1521 is given in Luther and Emser, ihre Streitschriften aus dem Jahre 1521 herausgegeben von Ludwig Enders, Halle, vols. i and ii, 1890 and 1892. See also the introductions in Weimar Ed., vii, pp. 259 f., 266 f., 614 ff.; viii, 241 ff. Also ii, 655 ff. Numerous references are found in Luther's letters as given by DeWette, Luthers Briefwechsel, i, 542 ff; Enders, Luthers Briefwechsel, iii, 30, 70 ff. Compare also Köstlin-Kawerau, i, 259 ff., 395 ff.; Gustav Kawerau, Hieronymus Emser, Halle, 1898; Waldemar Kawerau, Thomas Murner und die deutsche Reformation, Halle, 1891; Berlin Ed., iv, 1; Realencyk., v, 339 ff.; xiii, 569 ff; xxiii, 391.

A. STEIMLE.

Allentown, Pa.

[1] An English translation which is readily accessible can be found in Schaff's Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. v, 83 ff.

TO THE LEIPZIG GOAT

GREETING

If I had called you a goat, my Emser, you would surely have written a book or two about it and heaped all sorts of lies, slanders, and insults upon me in your customary way. But now since you write yourself down a goat, and in such glaring letters that everyone must notice, and since you threaten to do no more than butt, as you say, "Beware, the goat will butt you," I daresay I may with your own permission and approval address you as a goat. It was hardly necessary for you to put it down in black and white, everything about you shows that you are a goat. Moreover, that you cannot do more than butt is proved abundantly by your books and your speeches. Do you not think, however, that I might answer your flimsy threats, and say, "Dear ass, do not kick." May God help the nannies whose horns are wrapped in silk; I, please God, am safe.

Have you never heard the fable of the ass who had a roaring-match with a lion, and some of the animals fled at the sound of his braying, but the lion turned to him and said: "If I did not know you to be an ass, I might be afraid of you myself." You see every day that I am not afraid of those who have more wisdom and sense in one hair than you have in your whole body and in your soul besides, and yet you dare defy and threaten me; by which you bring convincing proof that you have given up your reason and become an unreasoning animal, and the man has become a goat.

What could an unreasoning goat like you do with the Holy Scriptures? How could he interpret it, not according to the letter that killeth, but according to the spirit that giveth life, as you boast of doing in this little book of yours? Why, you can hardly express yourself in German, your words come along so clumsily, helter-skelter, in wild disorder. And as far as I am able to judge, you do not know nor will you learn for a long time to come what the Scripture means by the words letter, spirit, death, life. Your canon law will never teach you and just as little will your goat-brain ever guess it of itself. This is another proof that you have put off the man and put on the goat; you are Licentiat sacrorum Canonum but Prohibitat sacrae scripturae,[1] and such you will ever remain.

I fancy I know your real purpose in writing against me and I will pass by the fact that you are doing it with a presumption of learning and wisdom, which your own conscience doubtless tells you is lacking. I shall make this plain to you when your butting performance is over and my turn comes to scrape the horns of the goat. But from the very first mention of my name, and through no fault of mine, you have conceived such hatred toward me that I have been filled with wonder how any man could harbor such hatred and still remain alive, although your body begins to show it, and this hatred has made you a by-word throughout the land, and of all haters the great exemplar.

The same spirit of malice constrained you to write your first book to the Bohemians against me,[2] in which you dealt with me after your fashion. I wrote an answer[3] and quite unwittingly touched your sore spots. For, God knows, at

---

[1] A pun on Emser's title as licentiate of the canon law. Luther grants him freedom in the canon law, but declares the Scriptures a closed book for him. "Licensed in the sacred canons, forbidden in the sacred Scripture."

[2] A Latin treatise in the form of a letter to Dr. Zack at Prague. See Introduction, p. 277.

[3] Ad Aegocerotem Emseranum, M. Lutheri additio (Weimar Ed., II, 655).

that time I knew nothing of your goat-nature. Then your fury knew no bounds and you wrote a second book,[1] on account of which all the scholars turned their backs on you, as you know, because you poured out so many palpable lies and whole cartloads of abuse. But I took pity on you and did not wish to reply.

Since that time your unspeakable hatred cannot be satisfied, it cannot rest nor give up its revengefulness. In addition to writing many evil-minded letters you have written a third book against me under the name of Thomas Rhadinus.[2] You had it printed in Rome under an assumed name, in order that no one might suspect that it came out of your poisonous heart. I am concerned lest that hatred of yours, and nothing else but that, will be the death of you, especially when you begin to realize that your efforts are futile and that I simply ignore you. You poor miserable creature, how can any one believe, while such unnatural and consuming hatred dominates you, that you can understand the pure and gracious Scriptures, which, moreover, you do not read nor study. O God in heaven, how hopelessly blind you are! Is it not time for you to think of God as your Lord and Judge and to change your embittered and hateful heart?

Now, because I have hitherto not replied to your lies and calumnies, you put on airs as if you were the victor and I could not answer. Perhaps you are encouraged by the bull[3] to hope that I shall not dare to write again, so that you can remain on the field alone, fight without opposition or danger, and come out victorious with your pretensions. You boast that as a priest of God you will patiently suffer my barking and snarling, though I have endured it from you three times

---

[1] He gave it the title, Defence against Luther's Chase. See Introduction, p. 278.

[2] Luther erred in ascribing this book to Emser. See Introduction, p. 278.

[3] The papal bull Exsurge Domine, signed by Pope Leo on June 15, 1520, which declared that if Luther did not recant within sixty days after its publication in Germany, he was to be held a "stiff-necked, notorious damned heretic," and prohibited him and his followers from publishing books. (See above, pp. 7 ff.)

in silence. You do not realize how invective follows invective in all your books, so that it is commonly said that of all abusive writers you are the worst. Such renown is just what you seek. And since such violent and senseless bluster is termed "patience" and "suffering" by you, and you can turn everything topsy-turvy and call things by new names, it is no surprise that you make the Holy Scriptures say just what you want. But take notice, henceforth I will not remain silent nor will I let you defile the Holy Scriptures with your goat's snout, as you have begun to do. The score which you have thus marked up against yourself may have to be paid in full.

I ask but one thing: that you quit your lying and write the truth. Your ignorance in the Scriptures is nothing so extraordinary, but your love of lying is not fitting for a priest of God and makes answering you an unpleasant task. The slandering and calling of names I will overlook, since I know very well that neither your nature nor your hatred can stop it.

Look not upon this preliminary sheet, my dear Goat, as evidence that I could not wait until your book was finished.[1] But since you write that I have fled before you and come along with such boldness as if you expected me to do nothing at all except allow you to triumph, I want to let you know that it will be quite otherwise, if it please God. For if you had expected an answer from me, without doubt you would not have come along in such miserable rags. Therefore, since your assurance has made you so careless and lazy that you can no longer perceive your own prattle and spittle, and since I have the intention not merely to answer you, unworthy as you are, but to take occasion to give some Christian instruction concerning the spirit and letter, of which you are completely ignorant—I would rouse and admonish you to open your eyes and take hold of the sword, not by the blade, as in your blatant assurance you do now, but by the hilt, with both hands, and take counsel

[1] See Introduction, p. 278.

with your fellows, so that you may, at least at the close of your book, say something serious and worthy of defence and show the best of which you are capable. Then there will be no need to write so many unnecessary books and take up people's valuable time. My dear Goat, you are near the end of your road.

If you say to me that what the Scriptures teach is light as goose-quills, but what you have spun out of the teachers, who often erred, and out of your own horny head, is strong as chains—please God, I will answer that, too, and silence your slanderous tongue that so wantonly defames and defiles God's Word. Put on your boldest front, arm yourself with daggers and swords. You have three books and several letters to defend, and especially some unchristian lies, which shall either make you give up your butting or else lead you into still more lying. I too will let myself go and give my mind a fair chance at you. Therefore, my dear Goat, think not that you are in the arena alone.

I know very well that it is not easy to deal with a shameless liar and blasphemer, as the proverb says:

Hoc scio pro certo, quod sicum stercore certo,
Vinco vel vincor, semper ego maculor.[1]

Yet for the sake of the truth, I must endure your immoderate and endless defaming and blaspheming. If you knew anything else, perhaps you would write it. I must therefore be patient, and let the storm of your turbulent hatred beat about my head. I, too, have often been vehement, but for the most part I have written that which was good and without violence;[2] you can do nothing but call names and blaspheme. Let it come, my Goat, one seeks in vain for anything good from you. Fiat voluntas Domini, Amen.[3]

---

[1] This I know to be true, that when I strive with filth,
Victorious or vanquished, always I'll be defiled.

[2] Cf. above, p. 12.

[3] The will of the Lord be done. Amen.

II. REPLY TO THE ANSWER OF THE LEIPZIG GOAT

1521

REPLY TO THE ANSWER OF THE LEIPZIG GOAT

1521

DOCTOR MARTINUS to the gracious and worthy H. E.,[1] my most kind Lord and dear Friend, my hearty good wishes.

Gracious and worthy Sir and Friend. I have received, together with your letter, Emser's pamphlet addressed "To the Wittenberg Bull,"[2] and although many advise me not to reply to one who is a notorious liar and blasphemer, yet I could not forbear to point out his lies to him, lest the sow's belly wax too big. For he is such a numskull that he dares to believe that he has right on his side and has won his case, though he produces only lies and nothing at all that amounts to anything. It did not seem right to me to remain silent when the whole aim of his lies is to bring my doctrine into bad repute. These considerations I have thought it well not to withhold from you. God have you in His keeping.

First, he wants to show what kind of bird I am.[3] This he really needs to do. For though I am not a saint, yet God has so far protected my life that no one can truthfully reproach me, and during these two years so many lies and liars have come to grief through me, that Emser's showing will demand much skill and labor. I have this advantage over him, that I need not show what kind of bird he is; every

---

[1] Haugold von Einsiedel. See Introduction, p. 279.

[2] See Introduction, p. 279.

[3] Emser, speaking of the book he is about to publish—the answer to Luther's address to the German nobility—had said: "I will show our brethren of the laity what kind of bird you are." To the Wittenberg Bull, ENDERS, ii, 3.

one knows him by his song and his feathers. And his books bear out his reputation. It is indeed a blessing when liars and knaves call me names.

He has printed it twice, in Latin and in German, and otherwise blabbed it here and there, that I have said: "I did not begin this game[1] in the name of God, and that it shall not end in God's name." What would he do if he really knew something about me? How fervently would the Christian love, of which he boasts, go out to me, when he is so active in spreading this poisonous, shameless lie of his own creation, which he intends to be a deadly thrust that shall discredit all my books and teachings at once and consign them to the devil. You have made a mistake and the blade has cut your fingers! Miserable wretch, how dare you testify and swear by the holy name of God that what you do against me is not dictated by hatred, envy, and lying, while your heart and conscience know the contrary to be true. Keep quiet and let me spread out your feathers a little, so that you yourself may see what others know—the kind of bird you are.

It happened at Leipzig, in the chancellery of the castle—I have a keen and lively memory of the occasion—that the discussion concerning the arrangements for the disputation proceeded, according to Eckian[2] practice, to place all the advantage on his side. We saw that our opponents sought glory rather than truth, although until then I had hoped that they had begun the matter in God's name, even as I had done. Then I uttered the plaintive words that came from a sorrowful heart: "This thing is not begun in God's name, nor will the end be in God's name." And the result has proved it; every one now sees that my prophecy is fulfilled. The kind of fruit the disputation has borne is all too evident.

I can prove my words not only by those of our party who were present, but by the testimony of Emser's own con-

[1] See the following paragraph. The game in question was the Leipzig disputation.
[2] John Eck was Luther's adversary in the Leipzig disputation.

science, who also stood by with eyes burning with hatred and great malice.

Therefore I despised this bare-faced lie and never wanted to answer it. I thought this holy priest of God and man of Christian love would come to his senses and himself be ashamed of such an open, crass lie, and fear that, even though I and our party kept silence, the table, the stove, and the vaulted arches of the chancellery would cry out: "Emser, do not kill yourself with lying. That lie is too much for a rimester and poetaster." I do not willingly answer those whom I know to be convinced in their own conscience and yet keep on belching forth lies.

And more than this, the holy priest of God knows as well as anybody that Eck started the disputation; how then could those words refer to anything I had started? For this I can boast and prove, that in this whole matter I have never started a controversy, for I have always against my will been torn and driven away from useful, helpful occupations, so that many good people have felt sorry that I must waste so much precious time in answering my lying and malicious assailants, who deliberately invited me to a match in order to win honors, and when they failed, wanted to drive out their guest by throwing filth at him. But since they have invited me, I shall stay if it please God,[1] against their will, or be sent home with honors. They shall suffer and pay well for the malice which they showed against me at the instigation of the evil one. I hope to God that the game shall not be spoiled for me in this wise, and that in less than ten years Emser, Eck, and the pope with all his retinue of liars and seducers shall know whether they or I have begun in God's name, even if they burn my books, and me in the bargain![2]

My words referred not to myself, but to Eck, Emser, and the Leipzig theologians; but in order to prove his Christian

[1] Cf. above, pp. 12 f.

[2] In some places Luther's books had been burned, in accordance with the injunction of the papal bull.

love this holy priest of God twists them in the same way as the Jews interpreted the word of Christ concerning Cæsar, the paying of the tribute, and the rebuilding of the temple. He writes that I said I did not begin in God's name, and affirms and swears that he is not animated by hatred and envy; even the holy name of God must serve him for his poisonous lies and be dragged into the dust. Do you begin to recognize your own feathers, my fine bird? Who will believe that so much as one word of yours is true, when you not only lie so wantonly, despite my diligence in begging you not do to it, but when you recklessly undertake to poison innocent hearts by your unchristian affirming and swearing and in the name of the living God spread your deadly lies among so many Christians. How you would rage and fume if you had caught me as effectively even in one little letter as I have caught you in this lie.

It is a piece of the same cloth when you write that I said: "The devil may care!"[1] because the poor, simple common folk were offended by my teaching. My Emser, he who would cow me, must not come at me with lies. During these three years many lies have been circulated about me, as you know, and all have come to shame. I am not in the least afraid that you will gain any glory in this, even if your lies should be believed for a while.

God be praised and blessed that you, Eck, the pope, and the whole Behemoth[2] take offence at my teaching. But the letters of many God-fearing people have borne witness that my teaching has brought comfort, profit, and improvement to simple, sorrowful, and captive consciences, and they have heartily thanked me, though I am unworthy, and have praised God that they lived long enough to hear such a word. Christ says: "The disciple is not above his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household." "As they have kept my saying, they will keep

Matt. 10: 24, 25

John 15:20

[1] See Introduction, p. 279.

[2] Cf. Job 40 : 15. A favorite expression of Luther's for the Romanists.

yours also." The Ecks,[1] the points, the Emsers, the goats, the wolves, the serpents, and all such irrational, wild animals were offended at Him, but the sheep heard His voice. Thus too, my Annases, Caiaphases, Herods, Judases, Pharisees, scribes, and all the pious, noble, delicate folk must be offended because of me—good luck to them! Christ says: "Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind." Nor would it have been a mortal sin, even if some one had really said what you lyingly attribute to me, assassin that you are, that the devil may care, if villains like you and your sort are offended—but I do not say it. Matt. 15:14

Therefore, my dear liar, I did not say, as you accuse me, that I regard the taking offence by the common people of so little account, that I consigned it to the devil. That is an invention of yours, in order to accuse me of of being, as you say, a proud and haughty man. My great and joyful courage hurts you to your very heart. But in spite of you and Eck, the pope and your whole crew, yea, in spite of the devil too, I am, and please God, will remain in a constant, fearless, proud state of mind, defying and despising you all as fools and blind men and malignant liars. I would, indeed, that your hate-filled eyes could see my joyful spirit day by day, although the mere hearing about it causes you grief enough. All your envy, pain, rage, and whatever evil thing you may do shall help you not one whit. You call me proud because I will not humble myself before such furious, bloodthirsty tyrants and do not accept your lies and your poison. In the same way, even Christ and John were accused by the Jews of having a devil. John 8:48 Matt. 11:18

But if I knew that my teaching brought injury to one simple-minded man—which cannot be, since it is the Gospel itself—I would rather suffer ten deaths than allow such teaching to spread or go unrecanted. He is a villain indeed, worse even than Emser himself, who would not sympathize with the common people when they take offence. Again, he is unchristian who would sympathize with the

[1] "Eck" means corner.

tyrants and Pharisees when they take offence. I will not waste any words arguing whether I am a haughty man or not, since that does not concern my teaching, but my person. I have said repeatedly: Assail my person if you will, and in any way you will; I do not claim to be an angel. But I will allow no one to assail my teaching with impunity, since I know that it is not mine, but God's. For on this depends my neighbor's salvation and my own, to God's praise and honor. Now I think one would sooner believe my fellow Wittenbergers, who see my daily life and have constant dealings with me, rather than the lying outsider, Emser. This I know well, that I am in daily receipt of warnings, not only from my neighbors but in letters from many countries, not to meet men so freely, and they chide me for my ready accessibility, even at the peril of my life. No one has ever accused me of a proud spirit except Emser, whom I should really believe, because according to the proverb one's enemies tell the truth. But he has made himself so notorious as a liar that everybody discounts him. Moreover, the responsibility which rests upon me alone certainly would be quite enough to humble any proud spirit, even if I were haughty by nature. Many regard it as incredible under these circumstances that I should still live. I have so much work that six years ago three of me would have had more than they could do, and yet, by God's grace, I am now hale and hearty, full of joy and courage; I have even, at times, a little leisure. All of which is, without doubt, the doing of my Lord Jesus Christ through the prayers of pious people, without any merit of mine, to spite and vex all the enemies of the Divine word, that, if God so wills it, they shall become like unto their fathers, the Jews, of whom it is written: "They have provoked me to anger with a strange god; I will provoke them to anger with a strange nation."

Deut. 32:21

Again, you also write that I have forbidden obedience to the pope and the secular authorities, yet, hardened liar that you are, my many books do not make you blush, in which I clearly teach the opposite, even in the book

De Captivitate Babylonica,[1] which is said to be the very worst. Thus you lie about my presence, my absence, my books—from every angle you are a liar. I burned the pope's books[2] on account of this teaching, that he deprives the temporal authorities of the obedience which is their due, and now you say, I also teach the same. This is what I said: The pope and the bishops have no right to burden Christians with their laws; nevertheless their illegal power is to be suffered and borne by those under them, in so far as it can be done without sin and danger to the soul. This I have written not in one place only, but in many.

And, my dear liar, you cannot so glibly deny the authorship of the book of Thomas Rhadinus.[3] Your drivel and snivel is not easily hidden, and the ability displayed, which you rightly claim for yourself, is the very image of your addleheaded stupidity in philosophy and theology, as shall presently be made plain to you. If there were any ability in the book, I would not ascribe it to you. And who will believe that it is your intention to attack the abuses of the clergy? Why were you silent about the abominable abuse of the indulgences and all the Roman knavery, and why are you still silent? Besides, you do not attack any of my books except those wherein I attack not the estates, but the vices. How can you revel in such lying? You confess the vices and shortcomings of the estates and hold the pap in your mouth at the same time;[4] but you desire to be acclaimed a pious man and the foe[5] of vice.

---

[1] In this edition, Vol, II, pp. 170 ff.

[2] With the bull of excommunication Luther burned the Canon Law in which this teaching occurs, and other of the "pope's books," December 10, 1520. He immediately published his reasons for the act: "Why the Books of the Pope and of his Disciples were burned by Dr. Martin Luther." (See Weimar Ed., vii, 161 ff.)

[3] Emser distinctly disclaims this authorship in his book To the Wittenberg Bull, and feels complimented that Luther thought he could write "so noble and able a book." Luther was in error in ascribing it to Emser. See Introduction, p. 278.

[4] Brei im Maul. A favorite expression of Luther's to indicate mumbling, i.e., equivocation. See Dietz, Wörterbuch zu Luthers Schriften, i, 343.

[5] Feind in the Weimar Ed.; in the others, Freund.

But I notice that since the rising water almost swamps the boat, and vice and the vicious are going down together, you pretend to save the estate, but your real intention is to increase wickedness and vice, as was done by the Council of Constance.[1] However, we shall doubtless receive instruction about these things in your precious, superior little book,[2] which begins with lies and doubtless will end with lies. I could point out many more such lies, which I have passed over until now. Do not hack at the high limbs or the chips will fall into your eyes. I therefore pray you again, my Emser, for God's sake, moderate your lying and make amends for this lie, so that you may not go too far in tempting God. I know you cannot harm me, and I would rather see you repent than perish. That I may withhold no duty which a Christian owes his enemy, and I notice that you stake your soul upon your cause, like an angry bee sacrificing its life with its sting, I will offer you now what I have offered once before to an enemy—leave to choose either anger or mirth; and I will give you both exhortation and encouragement, that when your last hour comes —for we are uncertain of any moment—you need not be frightened or driven to despair when my image rises up in your memory, and I assure you now that what you have done to me shall not then rise up to your hurt. I desire to do my part for the salvation of your soul. If, through the influence of the bitter foe, you should spurn this offer now and laugh at it and make the sign of the cross against it, as I fear you will do, nevertheless remember it when the time comes and the need arises, and do not despair. And I want all my enemies to know this, who have not had personal experience of the anguish and terror of death. I know whereof I speak, and the time will come when they will know it too; God grant that it may not be their destruc-

[1] The Council which was called to reform the church, but which condemned Hus, with the result that he was burned at the stake, 1415.

[2] Emser's Answer to the Unchristian Book of the Augustinian Martin Luther addressed to the German Nobility. It had not yet appeared, but Luther had seen the first pages. See Introduction, p. 278.

tion. Do not delude yourself with the idea that I shall recant so much as one iota of my teaching, even if it should please God that you become my cousin[1] or my sister or my brother-in-law, that you turn sheep or remain goat. It is not a matter of recanting, but of nothing less than staking life and limb, my Emser. For that God grant me His grace. Amen.

In order that you yourself may see how crassly you lie, and that your writing against me is not prompted by love of truth, but by sheer, rabid hatred, I will say further: If I should be so possessed—from which may God preserve me—as really to say that I had not begun this work in God's name, why should you fight about it? Especially since you proclaim so loudly, that you wish to oppose my teaching only, without any rancor at all? Are there not many who teach for the sake of gain and money and honor and yet teach the truth? Have you not read in Matthew vii that on the last day some will say to Christ: "Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name and done many wonderful works?" to whom He will nevertheless say: "Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity," by which He proves that they did not do these things in His name, as they boast. Look out, lest you be a comrade of theirs, since you affirm and boast so strongly that you began this in God's name. Matt. 7: 22, 23

Again, Balaam uttered the noblest prophecies, not for God's sake but for goods' sake. Christ says, Matthew xxiii, that men should hear the scribes that sit in Moses' seat even though they were evil, of whom you will doubtless admit that they did not teach in God's name, but for the sake of honor and profit. Is it not true that you and all the popish dissemblers and liars defend this principle and unite in saying that greedy, lecherous, honor-seeking prelates and teachers are not to be despised; in short, one should not Numb. 34:1 f. Matt. 23:1 f.

[1] The concluding sentence in Emser's Reply to the Wittenberg Bull reads: I advise you, out of Christian love and faithfulness, to desist from this folly. . . . If you recant, we two shall yet become good cousins and I will help you attack the abuses . . ., ENDERS, ii, 8.

look upon the life, but on the teaching? Now, it is impossible that they teach and govern in God's name, because, as
Phil. 2:21 St. Paul says of them, they all seek their own. If you want to root out all those who do not teach and govern in God's name, how many of the clergy would be left, and what would become of you? I hope that you do not want your teaching to be judged by your own sanctity, for what could it be but sheer knavery?

Phil. 1:15 St. Paul in Ephesians i glories in the fact and rejoices that the Gospel was preached by some from envy and self-seeking, yea even by the enemies of the Gospel who preached it merely to destroy the Gospel. But you, holier and more excellent than St. Paul, would suppress my teaching if you could prove one evil thing against me, by which you show how thoroughly blind you are to the hatred and malice in your heart. And since you despair of making a case and cannot harm my teaching, you turn your snout and teeth on my life. And your scrutiny is so close that you are even on the watch for every word of mine, since you cannot find fault with my works. You pretend to attack my teaching, you really attack my life. I imagine you must have strayed into the carnival and become the poet mentioned by Horace,[1] who set out to make a cask and it became a jug. It is like the preacher who announced that he would preach on love and then preached about a goose.[2] It is true, you have not the ears of an ass, as you say yourself;[3] look to it lest you have the brain and heart of an ass, when you do such awkward and senseless things.

If I had wanted to attack your life, do you not think I

---

[1] Ars Poetica, 21 f. "A flagon begins to be fashioned:
Why, as the wheel revolves, does a pitcher come forth?"

[2] Not an impossible case. Mathesius tells of the jests that were perpetrated in the pulpit at Easter to relieve the Lenten sadness (Sermons on the History of Luther, Nürnberg, 1570, p. 64 (Sermon VII). For a remarkable series of such subjects, among them "A Blue Duck," see Murner's Schelmenzunft (ed. Spanier, Halle, 1912).

[3] Emser had written: Though I have not ears like an ass, yet since Aristotle, Thomas, Bonaventura, popes, cardinals and bishops, dead and alive, must be your asses, I would rather remain in the ass-stable (in which, too, Christ was born) than be in your crows' nest. To the Wittenberg Bull, Enders, L. u. E., ii. 3.

could have found the material? I could prove from your second book, the Assertio,[1] that you have acknowledged your hatred of me and that you wrote your first book of praise to the Bohemians[2] out of hatred to me—the very thing you deny so often in the same book. Thus you continually contradict yourself and never write anything but lies. But I did not want and do not now want to have anything to do with your life or with anybody else's life.[3] I am not concerned with the life but with doctrines. Evil life does no great harm, except to itself, but evil teaching is the greatest evil in the world, for it leads hosts of souls to hell. It does not concern me whether you are good or evil, but I will attack your poisonous and lying teaching that contradicts God's Word, and, with God's help, I will oppose it vigorously.

Furthermore, that your great wisdom and superior holiness may be astounded and cross itself at the sight of such a poor sinner and great fool, I will go on and say that I do not boast ever to have begun anything in God's name, as you boast with such solemn affirmations. What do you think of that, Emser? Now let your pen splutter, ring all the bells and cry aloud, that what is in me is all the devil's work, just as you would so gladly have done, out of great love, in this death-thrust of yours. Dear Emser, my heart's trust is, that I have begun it in His name, but I am not so bold as to pass judgment myself and to say brazenly it is surely not otherwise. I would not like to rely upon this confidence when God judges, but I creep to His grace and I hope that He will accept it as having been begun in His name, and if any impure motives have crept in, since I am a sinful man of ordinary flesh and blood, He will graciously forgive it and not deal severely with me in His judgment.

St. Paul has made me so timid when he says in I Corin-

---

[1] A venatione Aegocerotis assertio See Introduction, p. 278, also Enders, i, v; Weimar Ed., ii, 655 ff

[2] See Introduction, p. 277.

[3] Cf. Vol. II, p. 303.

I Cor. 4:4 Ps. 143:2 thians iv, "I know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified. I judge not mine own self, but he that judgeth me is the Lord." And David: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." But a bold and intrepid hero like you, high above St. Paul and all saints, who has neither flesh nor blood but is all spirit and God, calmly makes appeal to God's final judgment, saying that he does everything in God's name, without rancor, and defies the terrible judgment of God. Come, let some one snap his fingers to beat time for him and pull his beard. It would be in keeping, when you walk the streets of Leipzig that all the bells should be rung and roses strewn in the path of the new saint. And after your writing has overwhelmed me, I beg you also to attack God's terrible judgment on the last day and to write against it as an unjust tribunal unless it allows that your doings have been in God's name; and call upon God to enter into judgment with you, just as you do now. For alone of all men you have already pronounced judgment upon yourself and awarded yourself the crown. You alone are found justified.

O Emser, whither are you drifting? Do you not see that hatred has so maddened you that you do not understand what you say or do? I have read no more terrible, more abominable word than this, my ears tremble when you take God's final judgment upon yourself.[1] If I had no other reason to believe that you lie and dissemble in everything you put forth, your atrocious appeal to the final judgment would be more than enough for me. For it cannot come out of an upright, true heart, or else all the Scriptures must be wrong. High oaths are signs of deep lies. You thought to gain men's confidence with lies; that was the very blunder by which you lost their confidence.

---

[1] Emser had written: "I affirm by my faith as a priest as I would under oath that envy or hatred of your person has had no place in my heart and has not now, and in this I appeal to the great judgment of God, who shall pass sentence upon you and me." To the Wittenberg Bull, ENDERS, ii, 5.

Who will believe you in anything after you have thus, with false heart and lying words, called upon God's judgment? And if you do not lie, your own blindness steps in and destroys whatever confidence men had in you. How could you produce anything good about the Holy Scriptures, when you are so stupid and blind as to understand neither your own heart, nor your own words, nor God's judgment; your talk is like that of a drunken maniac.

My advice to you is, remain a rimester[1] and stick to writing your doggerel; lies and lapses in them will do no harm. The Word of God and the Scriptures are too high for you, your attempts to reach them are such miserable failures. I will cite one more instance of that by way of giving a foretaste of your book.[2] You begin it by lamenting that the spread of my teaching has left no house in which there is not argument and dissension concerning me. My Emser, pray, who has asked you to give such glowing testimony against yourself? How could my teaching be more strongly supported than by this confession of its worst enemy? God is leading you like Caiaphas, that just when you mean to say the very worst thing, your hatred produces the very best testimony for me. My hope that I have begun in God's name and that I teach the Word of God aright has no stronger witness and sign than this, that its rapid spread throughout the world without my doing or seeking it, and in spite of untold opposition and persecution by the powerful and learned, has brought about dissension. If that were not the case, I would have despaired and given up long ago. John 11:49 ff.

That the real nature of the Divine Word is to produce

---

[1] Emser had found favor with the humanists by his Latin poems. In his letter to Zask, the first thrust in this battle, he appended verses admonishing all parties to peace. His poetical gift was not extraordinary. See Kawerau, Hieronymus Emser, 19, 31.

[2] Emser's answer to Luther's Address to the German Nobility. It had not yet appeared, but Luther had seen its first pages. Emser had written: "What has ever been produced in Germany that is worse, more harmful or more poisonous than Luther's teaching, books and writings, which in a short time have brought about such contention, disorder, and violence that there is not a country, a city, a village, or a house but in it there are factions and one is opposing the other," ENDERS, II, 7.

just such a movement and disturbance is affirmed by
Ps. 147:15 Psalm cxlvii: "God's word runneth swiftly"; and by
Luke 21:15 Christ: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay and resist";
Matt. 10:34 ff. and in Matthew: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword and dissension. For I am come to set a son at variance against his father, and the daughter against the mother, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

If the enemy himself confesses that my teaching produces such effects in the world, what better thing could I wish to hear? Is He not a wondrous God Who turns Balaam's malediction into benediction and makes my enemies' threats my comfort and their defiance my strength? See how cleverly you have hit upon the nature and work of the Divine Word, my precious expounder of Holy Writ! You argue that it shall go on in peace, produce no conflict, cause no offence. But Christ says it cannot and will not be thus. If your first sheet brings such arrant foolishness in the beginning, what will the twenty that follow bring?[1] Nothing, methinks, but fools' play and blasphemy. You want to write a book and do not know how to begin; you undertake to expound God's Word and do not understand its nature, its purpose, or its work. Think you not, my dear Goat, your butting has been very clever? I hope you will butt me like that every time.

This is exactly why I firmly believe that the greater number of the popes' and all the sophist theologians' books are the devil's teachings: They have been received by the world peacefully without opposition, have been accorded all honor and held in higher esteem and fear than the holy Gospel. If they had come from God, they would have pleased the smaller number, brought discord into homes and made some men martyrs. But you, a holy priest of God and a

[1] Emser: "If the first sheet throws you into such a frenzy and you show so soon how you feel the goat's butting, what will the twenty that follow do to you?" To the Wittenberg Bull, ENDERS, ii, 3.

Christian lover, pretend to write peaceful doctrine which shall not give offence, and you appeal to the final judgment that you do so without rancor and in the name of God. My good friend, you make St. Simeon a liar when he says in Luke ii: "Christ is set for the fall and rising again of many, and for a sign which shall be spoken against." All the strife and the wars of the Old Testament prefigured the preaching of the Gospel which must produce strife, dissension, disputes, disturbance. Such was the condition of Christendom when it was at its best, in the times of the apostles and martyrs. Luke 2:34

That is a blessed dissension, disturbance, and commotion which is produced by the Word of God; it is the beginning of true faith and of war against false faith; it is the coming again of the days of suffering and persecution and the right condition of Christendom. But Emser thinks this must be prevented by all means, and therefore other and peaceful things ought to be preached. The Antichrist at Rome has long desired the same thing, and alas! achieved it, but St. Paul calls it operationem erroris, a working of error and believing a lie. For the sake of such preaching John Hus and Jerome of Prague[1] were burned at the stake in Constance, for their teaching too was a blow in the face for the goats and wolves and caused an uproar. Emser's idols, pope and cardinal, consulted how they could effectually oppose such teachings, especially concerning both kinds in the Sacrament, when the Florentine Cardinal[2] burst out: "O let the beasts eat and drink what they will, but they want to reform us and teach us what to do; here is where we must oppose them." And in accordance with his advice the game was played. 2 Thess. 2:11

A similar occurrence took place at Augsburg, where my cardinal of St. Sixtus[3] pretended, if only I would recant the

[1] Cf. Vol. II, p. 140.

[2] Francis Fabarella, archbishop of Florence, cardinal after 1411; died in Constance in 1417.

[3] Cajetan, who conducted negotiations on behalf of the pope with Luther in Augsburg in 1518.

indulgence affair, there would be no further trouble; we could easily find a "distinction" and a way out. This is their way of seeking God's honor and the truth. Therefore, even if Emser drags out Aristotle and holds the fate of Hus and Jerome before me, I would rather share Hus's shame than Aristotle's honor. I will gladly leave to him the liar and knave Aristotle, whether he go to the hog-sty or the ass-stable to find him,[1] that I may retain Hus, who by God's grace is now awakened from the dead and torments his murderers, the pope and the popish set, more than when he was alive. And if the pope and all the papal liars should burst with malice, nevertheless they must hear what John Hus flaunts in their faces: Ye Christ murderers may spill innocent blood, but you can never silence it. Abel, who was no match for Cain in life, only began to give him real suffering when he was dead. I hope it will be my lot, too, that, like Samson, I may bring greater disaster upon them with my death than in my life. Christ's death also accomplished more than His life, even as He says in John xii: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Gen. 4:10 ff. Judges 16:30 John 12:24

It does not vex me when he speaks of a prophecy concening a monk who should pervert the world.[2] For I hold St. Paul and Peter to be strong enough against all false prophets and both of them announced the perversion of the pope and his followers. And where I have the clear Scriptures, I pay attention to no prophet even though he came down from heaven, for St. Paul has said in Galatians i that we should not believe an angel from heaven if his teaching were different from that of the Gospel. But that the pope and his fellow-tyrants have taught differently is as clear as

Gal. 1:8

---

[1] See Emser's words in note on p. 298.

[2] Emser: "Many years ago the prophecy was made that in our day a German monk would fall into great error. . . . It is to be feared that he (Luther) is not far from being the one, perhaps he is the very one of whom the prophecy speaks." Emser's Answer to the Unchristian Book of the Augustinian Martin Luther Addressed to the German Nobility, ENDERS, i, 6.

day. Hus proved it, so did I and many others, and I will bring still better proof, so help me God.

And now, my Emser, that you have of your own accord taken hold of this matter and pushed yourself into something which does not concern you, I shall see that you do not escape. You have given a new stimulus to my pen; you shall remain to the end of the game and your name will be mentioned in many other books. Nor will it help to complain. But if you will recant and give up dissembling, you will soon cause me to be silent. If you will not do that, then do what you can. May God help His truth. Neither to me nor to you, but to God alone be honor and praise. Amen.

III. DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S ANSWER

TO THE

SUPERCHRISTIAN, SUPERSPIRITUAL, AND SUPERLEARNED BOOK OF GOAT EMSER OF LEIPZIG

WITH A GLANCE AT HIS COMRADE MURNER

1521

DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S ANSWER TO THE SUPERCHRISTIAN, SUPERSPIRITUAL, AND SUPERLEARNED BOOK OF GOAT EMSER OF LEIPZIG

WITH A GLANCE AT HIS COMRADE MURNER

GOAT, BUTT ME NOT[1]

PREFACE

Emser's Armor

Lo and behold, Goat Emser, are you the man with the long spear and the short dagger? God save me from the pitchfork which makes three holes at once. What a strange warrior you are, Goat Emser! In the last chapter of Ephesians St. Paul mentions four things that belong to God's armor—sword, helmet, breastplate, and shield. Of these you need but one, the sword, and since St. Paul's teaching is defective, you improve God's armor by adding a long spear and a short dagger, and without protection for head or breast you come at me as if I could do nothing but fall on my knees before you and let the unprotected knight thrust at me while I plead: "Gracious Sir Goat, spare my life."

Eph. 6:11 ff.

Emser's Oath

Then you swear by your priesthood, even as Hannibal swore by his God,[2] that you will not cease writing against me. Goat Emser, if only you had also improved the oath even as you improved the armor, and had sworn by your horns and your beard, as Socrates swore by his dog![3]

---

[1] Luther's reply to Emser's warning on his title page: Beware, the Goat will butt you. See Introduction, p. 278.

[2] Hannibal's oath "never to be a friend to the Romans." Livy, Hist. xxi, I. Polybius, Hist. iii, 11. Nepos, Hannibal 2.

[3] Plato's Apology, 21, C., "And I swear to you Athenians, by the dog I swear."

That would have been most terrifying to me and a truly philosophical oath, especially since you boast that you recently found Aristotle in the ass-stable with Christ.[1] I can see that it means a battle, for I am attacked with long spears and short daggers, which I hitherto did not guard against, since St. Paul does not mention them.

Saint Paul's Armor

In such a conflict I must put my trust in the breastplate and helmet and shield which Emser refuses—not because he despises them, as everybody knows, but because he does not need them, for nature has given him a tough skin, a thick skull, and a callous breast, which enable him to resist not me only, but the Holy Ghost as well. St. Paul explains the armor in this wise: He calls the helmet, a helmet of salvation; the breastplate, a breastplate of righteousness; the shield, a shield of faith. Emser needs none of these, he is satisfied with the most holy father, the pope, just as a creature ought rightly be satisfied with its creator. That is why he quotes the holy carnal law so much more frequently than the Divine Law. He simply grasps the sword, together with the long spear and the short dagger, and armed only with these attacks a well-equipped cuirassier, that is to say, the heretic Martin Luther. What think you? I trow the Goat is a man and a splendid hero who may well take the risk.

The Breastplate

In God's name, then, I will put on my armor. The breastplate of righteousness is St. Paul's name for a righteous and innocent life, which never does harm to another, or, as we say in German, a good cause and a clear conscience. The teaching of St. Peter is that a Christian should so live that he may not suffer for cause, and endure persecution only without fault of his. As the breastplate guards the breast and makes one fearless against the thrusts of the enemy, so he who is upright and has a good cause and a good conscience is not afraid, but trusts in this armor and meets his enemies with courage. So says St. Paul in II Corinthians i: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in

1 Peter 4:15, 16

2 Cor. 1:12

[1] See note on p. 298.

simplicity, etc., we have lived in this world." Our Goat does not need this armor, it is too heavy for him. He would rather be without the breastplate of a good cause and clear conscience; he is satisfied with the long spears and short daggers of blasphemies and lies.

The Shield

But now the evil spirit furiously assails innocent and pious people and seeks to pierce their good cause with long spears and short daggers, that is to say, he finds fault with it and brings it into disrepute with cunningly devised lies and misrepresentations, even as Goat Emser does to me. Even apart from that no cause is so good that we can glory in it before God, in whose sight no man is innocent (Exodus 34). Therefore we need the shield of faith, so that we may remain steadfast in our trust in God, and that even though poisonous tongues succeed in turning all men against us, we may not grow discouraged and lose heart, but put our trust not in human help or in our own just claim, but in God alone, Who will maintain our cause. Therefore St. Paul says: "With the shield of faith you are able to quench all the fiery spears and darts (he almost mentions Emser's short dagger) of the wicked one." It is not without significance that he uses these words, "fiery darts of the wicked one" and "to quench." For the lies and false statements of the wicked ones are so malicious and fiery that they would set the whole world afire if they could, and their hearts are well-nigh consumed with their great hatred. Of such we say in German: "What an evil-minded person." The just man therefore must commend his cause to God and trust in Him, and thus quench the fiery spears with the shield of faith. Paul ofttimes tried it in his experiences with the Jews. I have not had the experience with any of my enemies except Eck and Emser, who have been well-armed, not with ordinary but with dreadful fiery spears, but thus far they have not been able to harm me. If faith were absent, however, such fiery spears would surely burn up one's heart, as has happened to many. Emser does not need this shield, since he knows that I have never struck at anyone with

Ex. 34:7

Eph. 6:16

lies. But I need it, for in all my life I have never read or heard more fiery and wicked lies than those of Goat Emser, as we shall see.

The Helmet

Furthermore, there is need of the helmet of the Saviour. The Saviour or salvation is Jesus Christ, Who becomes our helmet when we follow His example and are comforted by it, and when we keep Him before our eyes, as St. Paul says in Hebrews xii: "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your faith." And He made Himself the helmet when He said: "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." Now, just as a helmet gives a sense of security and peace to one's heart, so assurance and peace come to a Christian when he remembers that his Lord Christ fared no better; he lets come what may, and cheerfully says: He is a wretch who craves a better lot than his dear Father and Lord. This helmet, also, Goat Emser does not need, though at the end of his book he has placed a picture of one lying at his feet, while he is devoutly praying, so that anyone not knowing him would think him in earnest about it. But his head remains unprotected and exposed to the powers of the air.[1]

Heb. 12:3

John 15:20

The Sword

He does, however, take the sword, the Word of God, and pretends to fight, not with the scabbard,[2] namely, the letter, but with the blade, namely, the spiritual meaning, which with his extraordinary understanding of the spiritual, and as a true disciple of Aristotle, he can do better than use German or Latin. I would gladly wrest that sword from him with my armor, only I cannot tell where he keeps it, for in his whole book I find nothing but the long spears and

---

[1] See Eph. 2 : 2.

[2] Scheide—Schneide are the words Emser uses. "If Luther will fight with the scabbard and prove his cause solely by the letter or literal sense, one must strike him with the naked sword and use the blade, that is to say, the right understanding of Scripture as the Christian teachers have explained it." Emser's Answer to Luther's Address to the German Nobility. Enders, Luther und Emser, i, 10.

short daggers of a bareheaded, unprotected, naked liar and blasphemer. It must have been a shrewd witch who sent him this dream, that the scabbard means the letter and the blade the spirit. But I suspect his holy priesthood learned it and everything else in the ass-stable from Aristotle.[1]

Very well; since the ass has an itching skin and is so frisky, let us come to the point. He gives three proofs of his great wisdom in this pretty, precious little book.

Emser's Attack

First, he makes his attack not against one of my books in which I discuss Scripture and doctrine, but against that one in which without much discussion of Scripture I offer mere honest advice to the German nobility[2] who are sufficiently intelligent not to need a setting forth of my teaching, but only of my honest opinion and advice. "Here," said the Goat, "I will catch the monk at his bath and make a name for myself, for his other books are too hard for my teeth."

Second, not sure of himself even with this advantage, he hit upon the scheme of writing a big book and filling it with quotations, to answer all of which means much labor. He thought, "If I write a little book, Emser can be too easily found out, as happened to me before." For it is difficult to conceal great foolishness in a few pages. "But now that I use many words and bring many quotations, everyone will say, Why, how learned is the Leipzig Goat; I think he was more than a match for the monk in his bout with the famous warrior." Once upon a time there was an ape who watched a cobbler cutting leather, and who, when the cobbler left his workshop, ran in and, as apes do, tried his hand too at cutting, and ruined all the leather. Thus my Goat, when he saw how I quoted the Scriptures and the teachers in some of my books, thought he could do it too. He imagined it quite enough to heap together all he could find, just as men of his stamp have so often done in violence to the Scriptures.

Third, since even that was not safe enough, he employs most diligently the real Emserian spiritual interpretation,

[1] See note on p. 298. [2] Vol. II, pp. 55 ff.

pulls out my words here and there as he pleases, smears his venom over them, and entirely ignores the context, so that neither my meaning nor his venom should be discovered. He does this all out of superchristian love, and with lofty spirit calls upon the precious blood of Christ and prays that Christ may save me from the error which Emser himself ascribes to me, so that I am made to teach nonsense and everyone should be led to say: "God help us, what poison Luther teaches! Blessings on the Leipzig Goat for showing us what kind of bird he is." These are the fiery spears and daggers of the wicked one, of which St. Paul speaks, with Eph. 6:16 which he so ardently desires to inflame the world against me. It is in vain, however, for God has fortified me with great courage and given me a good shield, which I will now call into service.

My statement, that forbidding priests to marry had caused untold misery,[1] he explains to mean that I taught that God punished the world on account of chastity. He proves his superchristian wisdom by quoting many passages of Scripture in which God rebukes unchastity, as if no one had ever read them before. In this way he seeks to show that I condemn chastity and inculcate unchastity. His violent hatred has so blinded him that he cannot see that nobody will believe him, nor will he look at or give heed to my books, which are easily accessible and by which even a child could prove him to be a malicious liar.

Again, my advice to lessen the number of monastic houses rather than increase it,[2] he twists to mean: Luther has taught that monastic vows should not be kept, cowls should be thrown off, monasteries forsaken. If these are not fiery, wicked spears, then I do not know what fire, wickedness, and spears are. Again, my teaching of Christian liberty[3] and my counsel to be of good courage mean, according to his interpretation, that I teach pride and arrogance; and he opens all the sluice-gates of his knowledge to show that the Holy Scriptures teach only humility, so

[1] Vol. II, p. 120. [2] Vol. II, pp. 115 f. [3] Vol. II, pp. 312 ff.

that if Emser had not appeared no one would know that the Scriptures teach humility. According to the superchristian, superspiritual interpretation of Goat Emser, therefore, Luther teaches nothing but unchastity, arrogance, disobedience, and similar vices. Other statements belong here too—his accusation that I said I did not begin in God's name, and, The devil may care, if the simple folk are offended by my teaching.[1]

His whole book is full of such assertions and spiritual interpretations, so that I cannot but think that what I feared for a long time has come to pass and that his unbearable hatred has made him raving mad, that he has lost all sense and cunning and no longer believes that there are other folk still on earth. It has happened ere this that violent hatred drove a man into delirium and insanity, just as we read in the myth of Hecuba.[2] But if he is not mad, it is not necessary for me to call him a lying knave who wantonly and out of pure malice tells lies which he knows everybody knows to be lies,—he does that himself in his book, in the sight of every one. My own books are here at hand, I appeal to them.

The Fate of Hus

That is the way John Hus and Jerome of Prague[3] were brought to the stake at Constance. They could not be fairly refuted, so a wrong construction was put on their words, as the writings of both men clearly prove. The same fate befell Christ, when He said: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." He was reported as saying that tribute should not be given to Cæsar. So it was also with St. Stephen, Acts viii, when he preached that the temple at Jerusalem was not the true house of God, but that Christ desired a true house of God through faith, and said: "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as he spake through the prophet Isaiah: The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me? My spirit shall come upon the quiet and humble heart, etc." They could not contradict this clear passage,

Matt. 22:17

Acts 7:48 f.

Isa. 66:1 f.

Acts 6:13

[1] See pp. 290 and 292. [2] In Homer's Iliad. [3] See Vol. II, p. 140, note.

so they suborned false witnesses, who testified that he had blasphemed God and the holy temple, and must therefore die.

And my Goat, full of the same Jewish spirit, reasons the same way. He could not deny my statement[1] that the prohibition of marriage to the clergy wrought much misery, for it has even become the subject of the song and chatter of the children on the streets. I had also quoted the clear statement of St. Paul in I Timothy iv, by which I proved that the pope, in that prohibition, was an apostle of the devil. This silenced every one of them, not merely Emser; they all found it impossible of answer. But now he comes from the rear and smites me with the blade of his spiritual interpretation. He accuses me of teaching that chastity brings God's punishment upon the world, and bids me stay at home with my Greeks, who do not accept the command of the pope-devil. This I am to consider an answer to my argument. 1 Tim. 4:3

What a strange world it is! If I had been discovered but once in such lies and deceit and tomfoolery, there would be an end to all my teaching and reputation, to men's confidence and trust in me, everybody would rightly treat me as a knave and an infamous rogue. But my enemies have better luck. Though they incessantly give out the clumsiest and most bare-faced lies about me and because of them are openly disgraced, yet men do not lose confidence in them; everybody still hopes that some day they will catch me, although one can see by their wanton lies that their opposition to me is not for the honor of God; all that they do would accomplish nothing even if I were full of devils, because they undertake to drive out devil with devil and not with the finger of God. No matter how much they lie and make fools of themselves, they have full forgiveness; if I waver a hair's breadth, every word I ever uttered must be rank heresy. And when they fail in that, they still cling to my skirts and harp on my sharp, stinging style of writing. Luke 11: 15, 20

[1] Vol. II, p. 120.

Luke 6:41 They cannot forget the little mote in my eye, no one wants to see the great beams in their eyes.

Therefore I truly need God's help. I am a lone man and afflicted with faults as men are, but I am expected to show a complete circle without a single break and without the slightest faltering; besides, I have been dragged into the game against my will. But they, who are many and who have crowded themselves into the game, have the advantage, in spite of many gaps and holes in their ranks. Thus it must be, however, for so is it written, Can-
Cant. 2:2 ticles ii: "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among
Psalm 110:2 the daughters"; and Pslam 109: "Thou shalt rule in the midst of thine enemies." They are ranged about me, many against one, I stand in the midst of them alone, in order that it may be seen how easily truth, the strong and unconquerable, wins fresh honor when facing a lie, and with how much labor and trouble the impotent lie wins the shame it deserves when faced by the truth. My dear Goat might have had shame enough in other ways and enjoyed himself, but in attacking the truth he must earn his shame with much raving and raging.

This would be a sufficient answer for the Goat, since his spirit and intention are clear from his unchristian lies and perjuries. For you cannot fight the devil when you see him; you can only make the sign of the cross and run. But it is high time that the evil spirit, who never ceases to lie and blaspheme the Divine truth through the mouth of Goat Emser, be exposed and brought to light and be sent home with the shame he has won, and that Emser and his
Isa. 33:11 crew be taught the meaning of Isaiah's saying, Concipietis ardorem et parietis stipulam, you shall conceive heat, you shall bring forth stubble.[1] The poets have it, that once upon a time the great mountains were with child, and when every one expected a child large as a mountain, it proved to be a mouse, which made every-

[1] The quotation is from the Vulgate.

body laugh. This is the origin of the proverb: The mountains labored and brought forth a mouse.[1]

So too, my Goat Emser made terrible threats about his butting and whetted his long spears, short daggers and swords, and then the great and bloody war overran much innocent paper, making just so much more paper for use in privies and drug stores—although even such honor is too great for those unchristian lies, blasphemies, and perjuries against the holy Word of God.

I had so clearly proved, with strong and unanswerable passages of Scripture, that all Christians are spiritual and priests,[2] that, much to my surprise, even Emser did not have the courage to invent lies with which to slander my position; he grudgingly admitted it. But he showed his master-mind by distinguishing between two interpretations of Scripture and saying that I strike with the scabbard, but he would strike with the blade Let us observe carefully, he will show us a particularly fine masterpiece.

He takes as his text the passage from St. Paul, in II Corinthians iii: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," and teaches us that he who understands the Scripture only according to the letter and not according to the spirit, had better read Virgil or some other heathen tale, for he reads only to his own death. Luther does this very thing; he follows the "letter," beats the air with the scabbard, and does not teach the spirit.

2 Cor. 3:6

Letter and Spirit

Dear reader, mark it well, this is the chief article of the Emser theology, and on this field the cause will be won or lost For it means first of all, and the holy priest of God must draw this conclusion himself, that St. Peter taught the letter and death, when he said I Peter ii: "Ye are a royal priesthood and a holy nation." By this text I proved that all Christians are priests, for Peter addresses all Christians, as the words themselves clearly prove and expressly mention the people by name. If I then teach the letter and

1 Pet. 2:9

[1] The fable is found in Phædrus; the proverb, in Horace.
[2] Vol. II, pp. 66 ff.

death and fight with the scabbard when I quote these words of St. Peter, the shame is not on me but on St. Peter. And I would ask this very spiritual priest of God to show me in these words of St. Peter just what is letter and what is spirit, unless he would like to say that they have neither letter nor spirit—which he will doubtless not say.

He declares: Whoever explains these words to mean that all Christians shall be such priests as are consecrated by bishops, he strikes with the scabbard, takes the letter and follows a death-dealing interpretation, for St. Peter speaks of the inner, spiritual priesthood which all Christians have, and not of the consecrated priesthood. My answer is: It is true that St. Peter speaks of the spiritual priesthood; indeed, I go farther and say that he does not so much as mention the consecrated priesthood, and therefore his words cannot be a scabbard or a death-dealing "letter" as Emser dreams; but he who applies St. Peter's words to the consecrated priesthood retains not even their letter or "scabbard," his labor is ill spent and amounts to nothing. St. Peter's words, according to both letter and spirit, have but one simple meaning. Of course, Emser does not know what the term "letter" means, therefore he makes scabbards and other creations of his fancy out of the Word of God. He also dreams about two kinds of priesthood, the one spiritual, the other churchy,[1] or, as he says, e c c l e s i a s t i c u m. He maintains that the words of Peter can be applied to both kinds and that the only difficulty is that of applying them to the right kind, and he censures me for not applying them properly.

All this is pure error and blindness, and Emser had better stayed at home with his wild guesses. I have never said that St. Peter's words have anything to do with his fictitious priesthood, which he calls e c c l e s i a s t i c u m and which I will henceforth designate as "churchy." Nor did I say that all Christians are churchy priests. The holy priest of God ought to have put his spectacles on his nose

[1] K i r c h i s c h.

and read my book with a little more care, then there would have been no need of burdening me with such lies. Even if the foolish dream should be correct and St. Peter's words refer to a twofold priesthood, the letter and scabbard referring to one, the spirit and blade referring to the other, the whole churchy priesthood would be a harmful and deadly thing, since it would be the one indicated by the death-dealing letter, and Emser himself declares that St. Peter speaks only of the spiritual, living priesthood. For what is not spirit is not living—it is dead. Again, in ascribing the death-dealing letter to me, but admitting that my priests are the living ones of whom St. Peter speaks, he makes the living to be dead and his own dead to be living; he turns his jugglery against himself, understands not his own prattle, makes his own priesthood a death-dealing thing itself and brings far more reproach upon it than any other man. Such is the fate of blind leaders of the blind who want to use the Divine Scriptures and wield the sword of the Spirit; it is too heavy for them, and they remind one of the saying: Who hath bound this man to that sword?

The Spiritual Priesthood

In order to avoid Emser's foolish dream we must know that the Holy Scriptures, particularly in the New Testament, where types are at an end, speak only of one, a spiritual priesthood, just as I said when discussing the papacy that the Scriptures speak only of one, a spiritual church.[1] And the priesthood of which Emser has dreamed and the church which the papists have devised agree with the Scriptures just as life and death agree with each other. And I hereby make this challenge: If Emser will bring forward a single letter of Scripture in which his churchy priesthood is called a priesthood, I will give in to him. But he will not take the challenge.

The Churchy Priesthood

The Scriptures make us all priests alike, as I have said, but the churchy priesthood which is now universally distinguished from the laity and alone called a priesthood, in the Scriptures is called ministerium, servitus,

[1] Vol. I, p. 349.

dispensatio, episcopatus, presbyterium, and at no place sacerdotium or spiritualis. I must translate that. The Scriptures, I say, call the spiritual estate and priestly office a ministry, a service, an office, an eldership, a fostering, a guardianship, a preaching office, shepherds. We shall proceed to prove this thoroughly. St. Paul says to Timothy: "The servant of the Lord must not strive." He calls Timothy a servant of God whose special duty it is to preach and be a spiritual leader of the people. Again, II Corinthians xii: "Are they ministers of Christ? So am I." And I Corinthians iv: "Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." Christ also, in Matthew xxiv, speaks at length about these stewards.

2 Tim. 2:24

2 Cor. 11:23

1 Cor. 4:1

Matt. 24:45ff.

The word "priest" has come from the Greek, in which presbyteros means what senior means in Latin and elder in our own tongue, because in olden times the spiritual authority was always vested in the elder persons, just as a city's councilors derive their Latin name Senatus from their age. Young people never made good rulers. So "priest" is a title indicating age and not rank, it does not make a man spiritual or a minister. St. Peter says, I Peter v: "I who am an elder, exhort you, my fellow-elders, to feed the flock of Christ which is among you." Again, where he says, "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder," we, on account of our perverted use of words, would be compelled to say, "unto priests or spirituals."

1 Pet. 5:1 f.

1 Pet. 5:5

Bishop is also derived from the Greek, where he is called episcopus, corresponding to the Latin speculator, and our own "watchman on his look-out," just as we speak of a towerman in the watch-tower, who keeps watch over the city to guard against harm by fire or foe. This means that every minister or spiritual ruler should be a bishop, i. e., an overseer, one who keeps watch and sees to it that in his city and among his people the Gospel and faith in Christ may be established and may be defended against

all foes, be they devil or heresy. Thus St. Luke says in Acts xx: "Paul called the priests of the church," that is, the elders of the Christians in Ephesus, "and said unto them, Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, the sheep of Christ, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Here it is clear that the elders were called bishops, that is to say, overseers of the church of God, that is to say, of the Christians, who are God's people.

Acts 20:17
Acts 20: 18, 28

Emser also knows from St. Jerome that "priest" and "bishop" are used interchangeably in the Scriptures, as, for instance, by St. Paul in Titus i: "Thou shouldest appoint priests in every city" (that is, an elder over them), and soon after he speaks of this priest in this wise: "A bishop must be blameless," and clearly calls the same man priest, bishop, elder, and watchman. That we now have bishops, rectors, priests, chaplains, canons, monks, and other similar titles signifying a difference in office, should not surprise us; it has all come from our habit of so interpreting Scripture that not a word of it retains its true meaning. Therefore God and His Scriptures know nothing of bishops as we now have them. These things are all a result of man-made laws and ordinances, and through long usage have taken such hold on us that we imagine the spiritual estate is founded on the Scriptures, although it is twice as worldly as the world itself, because it calls itself and pretends to be spiritual, but there is no truth in its claim.

Tit. 1:5
Tit. 1:7 f.

I called this priesthood churchy because it grew out of the church's organization and is not founded in the Scriptures. For it was the custom years ago, and ought to be yet, that in every Christian community, since all were spiritual priests, one, the oldest or most learned and most pious, was elected to be their servant, officer, guardian, watchman, in the Gospel and the sacraments, even as the mayor of a city is elected from the whole body of its citizens. If tonsures, consecrations, ointments, vestments made priests and

bishops, then Christ and His apostles were never priests or bishops.

Now come forward, Emser, and prove by so much as one text or at least one letter that our priests are called sacerdotes, Ecclesiastici or religiosi spirituales, and I will gladly approve and praise your jugglery with scabbard and blade by which you get two priesthoods. In order to become attorney for the defence you are bound to say what it is that you are defending and whence you derive it. This time your fine, spiritual mind quite disgracefully forgot to do so, and you are defending something of which you know not the what, the how, nor the whence. You are indeed Licentiat sacrorum Canonum and Prohibitat sacrae Scripturae.[1] You have licentiam to prattle to your heart's content, but you also have prohibition, seeing that you can prove nothing.

You know quite well that I am not at all affected by the quotations which you bring from some of the fathers, garbled to fit your dreams; even if the fathers happened to agree with you, that is not enough. I must have proof from the Holy Scriptures, since I also contend against you with the Scriptures. Then, too, the fathers give you no help against me, unless you first prove that they never erred. But you will not do that until the ass grows horns and the goat becomes a sheep. And after you have done that, even then I will say, No holy father has the power to ordain or establish an article of faith or a sacrament which has not been enjoined and established by the Scriptures, and I shall pay no attention to your long spear of straw, custom, and your short dagger of wax. Christ did not say: "I am Emser's long spear and short dagger"; nor, "I am custom and usage"; nor, "I am Ambrose, Aristotle, this teacher or
John 14:6 that"; but He did say: "I am the truth."

Since Emser relies alone upon three weapons in his war-

---

[1] See p. 283.

fare—spear, dagger, and sword—I shall also give attention to these three. First, then, the spear.

Emser's Long Spear

Your long spear is the spear of Goliath, and your short dagger, the dagger of Joab. If custom were sufficient, the heathen would have the very best excuse, for their custom of worshiping idols is more than four thousand years old. You ought first to prove that the custom is right and of God, but you think it is enough if it is a custom. And that I may give you, a novice in philosophy, a little taste of real philosophy, let me tell you that you ought not to prove prius per posterius, et principium petere.[1] I oppose the priestly estate, which has caused and originated the custom, and not the reverse. And you reply by adducing the custom! This is exactly as if I said, The coat should make the tailor and the shoe should make the cobbler. See, your philosophy is so precious and clever, quite as if it had come from Sir Thomas Rhadinus, the only brother of Emser's sister;[2] he is that sort of philosopher too.

1 Sam. 17:7
2 Sam. 20:8, 10

Custom

No one doubts that from the beginning until now the churchy priesthood has had garments, works, and ways that differ from those of ordinary Christians, and by means of which it has built up an external custom that has come down to our times and will continue; but shall this unvarying custom be sufficient to establish two kinds of priesthood in Christendom? Why do not the widely different customs and usages of cathedrals and monasteries make many kinds of priests, since none of these agrees with the rest and yet each has an unvarying custom of its own? Learn this, therefore, dear Goat, no custom can change anything that is fixed in the Scriptures and articles of faith. Custom is limited to the external and variable works and postures

[1] The antecedent by the consequent, and to beg the question.

[2] Luther insisted that Thomas Rhadinus, who had attacked Luther in a Latin treatise, and Emser were one and the same person in spite of Emser's emphatic denial. See Introduction, p. 278.

which characterize neither the Christian nor the priestly estate, but merely offices, ministers, and similar works. Ordination does not make a priest, but a servant of priests. Tonsure, chasuble, mass, sermon do not mark a man as a priest, but rather as a servant and an officer of the common priesthood.

We and all the people are priests without ordination by a bishop, but by ordination we become the other priests' workmen, servants, and officers, who can be deposed and transferred, just as in a cathedral one priest is the others' superior, dean, cantor, sacristan, or other officer. That the canon law is responsible for this perversion of the words of Holy Scripture and the undue importance given to such matters, by concerning itself almost entirely with making such ministers to be priests and spirituales, to which it also owes its name as the "spiritual law," and that no one to-day is called a priest or spiritual, except those servants of priests, is no argument against me—it is the very reason why that law ought to be given to the flames[1] and utterly destroyed. The traditiones hominum, the human ordinances, have at all times darkened and hurt the Divine laws, as Christ teaches in Matthew xv, and Paul in many places. My Goat, it would have been better to save your leaden dagger until you had occasion to cut butter or soft cheese.

Matt. 15:3 ff.

It is true, the holy fathers called the churchy priesthood a priesthood. What else were they to do? The custom had already crept in to separate the laity and the clergy in this way and they had to have a name for each. If I should preach in our day concerning the rulers of the church, who would understand me if I did not use the usual names—

---

[1] A few months before, on December 10, 1520, Luther had done this very thing. This and the subsequent references to the subject may have been called forth by Emser's pious words in his Answer to Luther's Open Letter to the Christian Nobility: "Help me and pray for me, ye beloved holy fathers in heaven, whose merit, example, holiness, and miraculous works Luther despises and denies, yea whose books, Christian laws, and ordinances he dares publicly to burn in defiance of God's honor and law." ENDERS, Luther und Emser, i, 3.

priests, clergy, spiritual? The name sacerdotes began to be applied to our rulers quite early, and was taken from Hebrews v, where we read: "Omnis sacerdos ex hominibus assumtus, etc."[1] This is spoken of the Old Testament office, and is applied by way of analogy to the New Testament office. If the good fathers had been compelled to write on the subject they would probably have found some other name in accord with the Scriptures rather than wickedly defend the name they used. Hebrews 5:1

In order that you may try your own spear and dagger, whether it will strike you or me the harder, answer this point. All of you say that the priest says mass and blesses the bread not in his own person, but as the representative of the whole church. You are forced to this by the truth, by your own conscience, by necessity and the uniform confession and faith of the whole world, so that even if a priest should not be pious or believing or worthy (and indeed no saint is worthy enough), nevertheless Christendom would still stand and be worthy. Who is, therefore, the real priest? He who performs the work as a servant, or he whom the servant represents? Who is priest? He who is responsible for the work and sends it forth, or the servant who carries and brings it? The priest is a messenger and servant in his work, and therefore another must be the real priest. I think this proves very clearly that we are all priests, and your priests are not a different kind of priests, but servants and officers of the common priesthood, as I said above,[2] and that your dream of two kinds of priesthood in Christendom is not true. Behold the way of drunken swordsmen, they grasp the sword by the blade, the spear by its point, and let out ridiculous grunts!

As I have repeatedly said,[3] the damnable laws and rule of the pope have brought it about that the precious names

---

[1] Every (high) priest taken from among men, etc.

[2] See pp. 321 f.

[3] e. g., in The Papacy at Rome, Vol I, pp. 354 ff.; Open Letter to the Christian Nobility, Vol. II, pp. 66 ff.

which were common to all, "church," "priest," "spiritual," and the like, have been taken away from the community and applied to the very small number whom we now call "spiritual" and "priests," and whose work we call the work of the Church, whereas we are all the Church and spiritual and priests, as many of us as believe in Christ, and they are but workmen, servants, ministers, guardians, shepherds, keepers, and watchmen. It seems to me that Goat Emser's dream of a twofold priesthood has fallen into the sand and mire.

I am surprised that a wise man and triumphant knight, such as you are, is not ashamed to fight me with "custom" in matters that concern Christian faith and God's Word. You juggle with your long spears and daggers, although even in temporal affairs custom is the weakest of arguments and universally ridiculed. Every one expects you to attack me with the Scriptures, but you let the Scriptures go, and fall back on custom. But I perceive quite well that the new wine of the holy canon law, which I burned[1] and of which you are an unworthy licentiate, containing as it does a goodly portion of custom, has not been able to stop its fermenting and has blown the bottom
Job 32:19 out of the cask, lest like Elihu, who ridiculed St. Job, you should choke with your great wisdom. Why need you teach us that this priesthood has come down to us through custom? Any peasant or child sees and knows as much. Take a spoon and taste your own words. If the priesthood arose and has since remained through custom, it can, like any other custom, be abolished or supplanted by some other custom, through human power and choice; the consequence is inevitable, that it is not instituted of God. For divine institutions rest not on uncertain custom, nor can they be altered by men. And indeed, I have said it before[2] and I say it again—this external priesthood has no foundation in the Scriptures, but owes its name and retention to long-continued custom.

[1] See p. 326. [2] See above, p. 323.

See how deftly you pierce me with your spear; you want to argue against me, but you argue against yourself and in my favor. A result of your superfine art of war! You point your spear toward yourself, rush against me with the shaft and the spear runs through you.

But tell me, Emser, for yourself, do you regard this a Christian custom, that you have a name different from that which Scripture gives you? Are you ashamed of your name? Or is the Holy Spirit not competent to give you a name which satisfies you? You despise the names He gives and invent new ones, so that no reader of the Scriptures can recognize you, but must say: From whence is this strange people? St. Paul calls the pastor of every city a bishop, that is a watchman, presbyter, elder, minister, dispensator; not one does he call sacerdos. But you call those "bishops" who are now nothing else but temporal princes, and those sacerdotes who read masses and pray the hours; you change and twist God's Word as you will. And just as you neglect the real work of the ministry, so you are ashamed also of the name, and to conceal both your neglect and your shame you apply to yourselves glorious and worthy titles, sacerdotes, ecclesiastici, and the like.

Not satisfied that God and we are content to leave you this evil and perverted custom, and that we wink at it, you insist that we should give our consent and approval to it as right and the true work of the Holy Spirit, while it is pure wantonness and a despising of the Holy Spirit on your part. You want to make a long spear and a short dagger out of it; it is to be right for no other reason except that you invented it; the Holy Spirit must be wrong and give way to you: He must needs serve as your court-jester. You shout your lies against me, saying that I revile and make blasphemous attacks upon the head of the Church, the pope, and on the priesthood, which I never did. For I have taught men to bear with and to honor all, even

unjust authority, not excepting the Turks whom you would so gladly devour. But you and your pope blaspheme Christ, God, and His Holy Spirit, twist all Their words and works and play with them as the jugglers play with their artificial heaven,[1] and for this I am supposed to kneel, call you gracious lords and give you humble thanks. I must be actuated by hatred when I refuse to proclaim your new and self-invented ways as founded in the Scriptures; you are not satisfied that I leave them alone and grant them their dignity apart from the Scriptures. But you are actuated by love when you take God's Scripture to your own property and make a mixture of Scripture for us to suit yourselves. God must follow you and let you make a shameful bugaboo of Him, and all the while I supposed you ought to obey God and let Him make you His children. Nor are we expected only to suffer such dishonor to our Lord at your hands, but we are to join you and the Jews in saying to Him Ave Rabbi Judaeorum, and to consider this horrible mockery as giving God the highest honor. Woe to thee, O Antichrist, and unto all thine apostles and priests!

Matt. 27:29

You are yourself obliged to agree that this priesthood is not derived from the Scriptures. The fact that anything is based on custom is an admission that there is no appointment by God or Scripture back of it; likewise the fact that anything is established by reference to the fathers and the teachings of men, is an admission that it has no Scripture warrant, for custom and the teaching of men differ widely from the Scriptures. This is my reply to the long spear of custom, for if it were a Christian custom it ought to have at least some foundation in Scripture and some trace of the sword of the Spirit. But since it is nothing but pure custom, what is it if not carnival buffoonery? However, I will not yet mock you, although you strongly tempt one to do so. Perhaps you could not find the sword in time for the carnival, therefore I will give you grace until

[1] The canopy erected over the juggler's booth at a fair was called "a heaven."

we come to the third head. Meanwhile I will extend the time as long as you wish, and not for you alone but the whole papal sect, who call yourselves the Church of God. My dear friends, pray be diligent in your search, and may St. Aristotle and the holy, cremated[1] canon law help you by all means to find the sword; then lift it up for a lusty blow at the heretic Luther, and be sure to strike him with the blade. Beware, however, lest you cut your own cheek. And since I fear you will not find the sword until this carnival has passed, practice with straw-pads in the meanwhile. I pray all men for God's sake to forgive me for jesting. Who can always be sober and serious with such childish, foolish, blind people, who venture at anything and accomplish nothing? Christ speaks of such when he says in Matthew xi: "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented," whatever you do, nothing avails, neither seriousness nor jest. This dense goat-head pretends to fight with the sword, but he no sooner mentions it than he declares: Now we will lay down the sword and take up the spear. He did not take up the sword before and he never takes it up thereafter. Who can be patient with such crude fool's play in these serious matters, for thus they seek to lead the people by the nose and to tickle their palates. I trust I am justified in mocking those who mock my God and His Word and work. Elijah, too, mocked the prophets of Baal.

Matt. 11:17

1 Kings 18:27

To end the matter, let me say that no one doubts that the sword of the Spirit, the Divine Word, is a safe weapon in every controversy. But Emser should first have proved that custom, even when good, and the teaching of men, are likewise valid. The sword, however, which he could use, he lets lie and quotes custom and the teaching of men, which are useless. Where is now the great, noble philosopher, Sir Thomas Rhadinus,[2] who found Aristotle in the ass-stable?[3] Did not Aristotle teach that it is wrong pro-

[1] See note, p. 326. [2] See note, p. 295. [3] Cf. p. 298.

banda per probanda probare, and petere principia?[1] These are the wiseacres who would win our young men for philosophy, and themselves know as little about it as they do about theology. They take their money from them only to send them away knowing less than when they came. It would be a great gain if you lumbering asses really knew your own philosophy which you praise so highly. What a ridiculous craft, where no man rightly understands his own trade.

The dagger, too, cuts your own fingers.

The Emser-Goat's Dagger of Lead

The Teaching of the Fathers

In order not only to blunt and beat back his spear and dagger but to break them in pieces, I will show that he is like a man who dreamed he found a spear and dagger and fought against the foe, but when he awoke found it was all a dream. It has been my experience that all who write against me and otherwise oppose me bring to the contest a timid heart and a worried conscience; they are afraid of Scripture, for they realize what unfamiliar ground it is to them. Therefore they labor painfully, with many turns and twists, to make it unnecessary for them to attack me with the Scriptures and to be defeated by the Scriptures. So they invent new lies, find daggers and spears and other fools' weapons and declare the Scriptures are so obscure that they cannot be understood apart from the interpretation of the holy fathers, and that we must, therefore, not follow the text, but the glosses of the fathers. This is what Emser calls fighting with the blade and not with the scabbard. And when they are able to bring one saying of the fathers against me, they ring all their bells, beat all their drums, and shout aloud that they have won, stop their ears and shut their eyes, and imagine they have closed and sealed all the Scriptures for me.

[1] To prove the proposition to be proved by the same proposition, and to beg the question.

When I see their cowardice and fear of the light, how can I be afraid of the blind moles who dread the light? They force me to think that they know nothing of the Scriptures. Theirs is the fate of the old frog to whom a young frog complained that a great beast, an ox, had come and trampled all the little frogs to death. The old frog thereupon became angry, puffed herself up and said: "What now, am I not just as big as he?" "Nay, mother dear," said the young frog, "not if you puffed yourself up until you burst."[1] In the same manner my goats also puff themselves up with their own breath and wind and spirit, and when I come upon them with the ox-foot "Thus say the Scriptures" I crush them until they croak.

In order that these word-jugglers may be seen in their true light, I ask them, who told them that the fathers are clearer and not more obscure than the Scriptures? How would it be if I said that they understand the fathers as little as I understand the Scriptures? I could just as well stop my ears to the sayings of the fathers as they do to the Scriptures. But in that way we shall never arrive at the truth. If the Spirit has spoken in the fathers, so much the more has He spoken in His own Scriptures. And if one does not understand the Spirit in His own Scriptures, who will trust him to understand the Spirit in the writings of another? That is truly a carrying of the sword in the scabbard, when we do not take the naked sword by itself, but only as it is encased in the words and glosses of men. This dulls its edge and makes it obscurer than it was before, though Emser calls it smiting with the blade. The naked sword makes him tremble from head to foot. But I cannot help him, he must take his punishment.

Be it known, then, that Scripture, without any gloss, is the sun and the sole light from which all teachers receive their light, and not the contrary. This is proved by the fact that when the fathers teach anything they do not

[1] Compare Luther's use of this fable in "The Papacy at Rome," Vol. I, p. 394.

trust their teaching, but fearing it to be too obscure and uncertain, they go to the Scriptures and take a clear passage out of it to shed light on their teaching, just as we place a
Ps. 18:28 light in a lantern, and as we read in Psalm xvii: "Thou wilt light my lamp, O Lord." And when they expound a passage of Scripture, they do not rely upon their own words and interpretation (for where they do that, which happens often, they usually err), but they bring another passage of Scripture which is clearer, and thus they interpret and explain Scripture by Scripture. My goats would soon find this to be true if they would read their fathers carefully, but since they simply skim over them and study neither the Scriptures nor the fathers, it is no wonder that they do not know what the Scriptures or the fathers teach.

I lose my patience when they thus revile and blaspheme the Scriptures and the fathers. They accuse the Scriptures of being obscure, while all the fathers deem them the light of
Ps. 119:105 lights, even as David says, Psalm cxviii: "Thy word is my light"; and they ascribe to the fathers the light with which Scripture must be illumined, whereas all the fathers concede their own obscurity and illumine Scripture by Scripture alone. And that is the true method of interpretation which puts Scripture alongside of Scripture in a right and proper way; the father who can do this best is the best among them. And all the books of the fathers must be read with discrimination, not taking their word for granted, but looking whether they quote clear texts and explain Scripture by other and clearer Scripture. How should they have overcome the heretics, if they had fought with their own glosses? They would have been regarded as fools and madmen. But when they brought forward clear texts which needed no glosses, so that reason was brought into captivity, the evil spirit himself with all his heresies was completely routed.

Allegories There is another study of the Scriptures, namely, the interpretation of obscure passages and allegories. This is termed a merry chase, in which certain elusive meanings are

the game that is hunted and caught. But the study that makes one fit for warfare is to be at home in Scripture, and, as St. Paul says, able to contend with abundant clear passages, without any glosses and commentaries, as with a bared and drawn sword. This is the significance of the golden spears in Solomon's temple. Then the adversary, convinced by the clear light, must see and confess that the words of God stand alone and need not the explanation of man. For the opponent who will not believe the clear words of Scripture, will surely not believe the glosses of any father. Tit. 1:9

So our conclusion must be that no teacher ought to be taken on faith, and that Emser's dagger is a foolish invention; we must examine whether these teachers quote the clear Scripture and stick to it, in order that the bared sword, the Word of God, alone may govern men. St. Paul taught us this when he wrote, "Prove all teaching; hold fast that which is good." He did not say that we should hold fast every one's teaching, but that we should prove every teaching and hold fast that which is good. But Emser and his sophists hold what Eck, too, so foolishly asserted at Leipzig,[1] that the teaching of the fathers must not be proved or tested, but accepted to the last letter, although everybody knows they all have erred many times. But if we are to test, as St. Paul tells us to do, what other touch-stone can we take than the Scriptures themselves? They must then be clearer and more certain than the teaching of the fathers, how could we otherwise judge by them and prove what is right or wrong? But the Goat, much more learned than St. Paul, would turn it about; he tells us we must not follow the bare Scripture, but the interpretation of the fathers, and makes the fathers the judges and testers of God and the words of God. He thus proves the truth of the saying, Folly grows without watering. The ancient fathers were never guilty of such 1 Thess. 5:21

[1] At the famous disputation in 1519, where Luther first publicly expressed what he here again affirms.

jugglery; this is a new invention of the pope and his partisans in the universities, that the Scriptures must be taken not as they are, but in the interpretation of the fathers. It is their way of escaping from the sword.

Philosophy

Since the Goat has recently become a philosopher, I must also present his Aristotle to him and show how much his Rhadinus knows. Aristotle wrote what common sense teaches the peasants even without Aristotle, that you cannot prove the obscure and uncertain with that which is itself obscure and uncertain. You cannot prove light with darkness, but what is obscure and uncertain must be made clear by that which is clear and certain. Since all the fathers go to Scripture for their proof, it is inconceivable that they were as senseless and hair-brained as Emser's philosophy and dagger would make them, and regarded the Scriptures as a dense fog—this is Emser's blasphemous and scandalous assertion—by which light and clearness was imparted to their teaching. Nay, they surely held the Scripture to be the light of lights and most clear and certain, and they appealed to it and depended upon it as the one teaching above all others which is plain and clear and by which every teaching must be judged and proved.

This was what St. Augustine did when he said that he would believe no teacher, however learned or holy, unless he proved his teaching by Scripture or clear reason. From that we learn again how the fathers are to be read, namely, that we ought not to ask what they say, but whether they use clear texts of Scripture and sound reasoning. But Emser and the pope's party cannot be blamed if they shrink from doing this themselves or permitting others to do it, and put their own fictions in its place, for if they allowed us to force them to prove their contentions by clear Scripture, —God help them, then their abominations would be revealed and they could not deny that their adherents are the kingdom of antichrist, leading astray the whole world under the cloak of the church and the priesthood,—as

I shall some day, please God, demonstrate.[1] It is therefore most necessary for them to revile and blaspheme the Scriptures, to thrust them under the seat and to say that they are a dense fog, and that we must take the interpretation of the fathers and seek light in darkness. The teachings of the fathers are useful only to lead us to the Scriptures, as they were led, and then we must hold to the Scriptures alone. But Emser insists that the fathers must also be retained as something special, alongside of the Scriptures, as if the Scriptures were not sufficient for our learning.

In order to bring out still more of the super-marvelous art of the dear Goat, I ask: If the Scriptures are a dense fog, how can you use them as a weapon against me, and say that you will strike me with the blade? Can you blow hot and cold with the same breath? Are the Scriptures to your mind at once a dense fog and a clear light? And since you arm yourself with three distinct weapons—the sword, the spear, and the dagger—the sword cannot be the spear or the dagger. Therefore when you use the sword, that is, the Word of God, you cannot at the same time use the dagger, that is, the interpretation of the fathers. What a rapid change of mind! First you say: The Word of God is a dense fog, our reason cannot interpret it, and then you interpret it none the less by using the sword. I perceive that you have divested yourself of your reason in this matter and stand in a class by yourself, that is, you are not like other rational men, since you no longer possess reason. You know, of course, what I mean, my noble Goat; I am calling attention to the accuracy with which you write.

Your three weapons also make it evident that you want to make us spiritual through the words and teaching of men. For if the spear and the dagger differ from the sword, and the sword is God's Word, which alone is the truth,

[1] Which he did a few weeks later in his Latin treatise against Ambrosius Catharinus. (Weimar Ed., vii, 705 ff.)

then the spear and the dagger must be man's word, and a lie. For what is not God's Word, is a lie; see Psalm cxv,
Ps. 116:11 "All men are liars." Therefore I have rightly said that your spear is a Goliath-spear and your dagger a Joab-dagger.[1] But if the dagger is to be God's Word as interpreted by the fathers, and the spear, too, is the interpretation of God's Word, then there are not three weapons, but one, namely, the sword, which is contained in all three. For with you stranger things are possible than that a sword should be concealed in a dagger. I think you must have gone to Master Blockhead's school where the ass stood at the head of the class. I wish you would remain quietly at home with your dreams and inventions. You might try these frivolous tricks in your verses, but leave God's Word in peace, it cannot abide such frivolous fictions.

We have but the one Word, which is spear, sword, dagger, and every other weapon with which we can give battle to the adversaries, even the holy Word of God. I hope this will make you see your tomfoolery with your three weapons. Next time take up a matter which you can prove by Scripture or by reason, and you will be in less danger of exciting ridicule with your buffoonery. For your spear and dagger are unknown except to your dreams. And this is sufficient answer for all the teachers you can quote, even Aristotle, who comes first in your list, and Gerson[2] and Scotus[3] as well. And if you do not find enough, take your calendar and make the list long, to keep people from noticing how you evade and flee the Scriptures as the devil flees the cross.

Tradition. They have found an argument by which to strengthen their spear and dagger in order to avoid the necessity of sticking to the Scripture, and show more ignorance in it than laymen. They know there can be no jesting when one comes with the Scriptures, and they with their man-made customs and teachings must needs melt away like butter in the

[1] See p. 325. [2] See Vol. I, p. 95, note.
[3] Johannes Duns Scotus, one of the most famous scholastics. He died in 1308.

sun. So they say: Not everything that is to be done in the Church is explicitly stated in the Scriptures, but Christ has commanded His apostles and their successors to teach and establish it, as we read in the last chapter of St. John: "Many other signs did Jesus, which are not written in this book; the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." See the exquisite interpreters of the holy Scriptures, how beautifully they can weave an apron and excuse for their shame out of the leaves of this sacred fig-tree of the gospel![1] They act as if they had done everything which is commanded in the Scriptures, but not enough had been written, whereas no one but Christ has perfectly fulfilled even one tittle of the Scriptures. John says Christ's signs and wonders are not all written, but he does not say that all that we are to do is not written. Nay, in the very next breath he says very plainly what we are to do, namely: "These signs are written that ye might believe." This faith is the work in which we Christians should engage, as Christ himself says in John vi. But these interpreters come and say, Not all that we are to do is written. John speaks of Christ's signs, they interpret it to refer to man-made laws and works. Christ's signs and our doing must needs be one and the same thing! I thank you, my friends, you certainly understand how to interpret Scripture, and Emser in particular, who here misses the letter entirely and smites me with the blade of the spirit, just as when he confirmed the canonization of the saints by the psalm-text, Laudate Dominum in sanctis ejus.[2] May God at length call a halt on you blasphemers of Scripture, you are such miserable deceivers!

John 21:25

John 20:31

John 6:29

Ps. 150:1

---

[1] Cf. Gen. 3 : 7.

[2] Emser had said: "Luther departs from his mother, the holy Christian church, which, in accordance with God's will, command, and revelation has had the custom from the beginning of the church until this very day, to canonize and exalt the saints, and we have many proofs in Scripture that it is the will and command of God, namely, Psalm cl: 'Ye shall praise God in his saints,'" etc. ENDERS, Luther und Emser, i, 115.

And even if that passage[1] did refer to man-made laws and works, which cannot be, ought we strive to write so many books that the world cannot hold them and thus do the very thing which the Apostle says he did not do? Verily, enough is written in Scripture to make entirely unnecessary any more commandments and laws; nay, there is no longer any authority upon earth to make Christian laws, as I have proved in many places.[2] And if those who assert that there is such authority on earth were moved by the Spirit, they would doubtless not pervert this text in St. John so blasphemously in order to prove their own contention. This perversion is a clear indication of the spirit in which they undertake to make laws.

John 14:26 They have still one other passage, John xiv, where Christ said at the last Supper: "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Here they assert that Christ did not cause everything to be written in the Gospel. They do not look at the plain words of Christ, when He says, The Holy Ghost will bring to your remembrance, not what you shall ordain and command, but what I have commanded and said unto you. Here again Christ's command is made to be the same as man's law. The disciples could not take in and understand all that He said to them at the time, and therefore He says the Spirit should tell them again the things they had forgotten or not understood, and this afterward came to pass. Christ was so careful to prevent anyone from bringing men's laws into his Church that He desired to speak of all things beforehand, even if it was not all remembered or understood. And in spite of all, the adherents of the pope turn this completely around and want to justify the laws of men by Christ's utterances against the laws of men; yet they want to be no heretics, but the masters of all Christians.

In this matter the pope's adherents stick up to their

[1] John 21:25. [2] e. g., Vol. ii, p. 233.

ears in the heresy of the Manicheans,[1] who also taught that the Holy Ghost, Who was promised, should teach what was not recorded in the Scriptures. Augustine refutes this error in a masterly fashion in his treatise Contra Felicem,[2] and proves that what the promised Holy Spirit was to teach had all been fulfilled and written down by the apostles.

Again, when Christ says to the disciples, "He that hear- Luke
eth you, heareth me," they explain this also to mean that 10:16
they are privileged to make laws as they please. Christ here speaks only of the Gospel which the apostles are to preach and we are to hear, but they make use of that saying to lead us into their own laws, yea, into their money-trap. So also when He says to Peter, "Whatsoever thou shalt Matt.
bind, shall be bound," they twist it to mean that the pope 16:19
may make laws at his pleasure, although Christ speaks only of the binding and loosing of sins. So they establish their position not merely by their own lying inventions, but by a perversion, corruption, and shameful abuse of the holy Word of God, which is intolerable, and yet they want to be the only teachers of all Christians, and brand everyone a heretic who does not bow low to their abomination and blasphemy.

It is therefore abominable and unchristian blasphemy for Emser to insist that the Roman customs and laws must be held as sacred as if they were commanded in the Scriptures, whereas they are neither known nor kept by all Christians. The Greeks and Orientals also are Christians, and have not accepted them, much to the chagrin of Emser and the pope's adherents. And even if they were adopted by all Christians everywhere, that would not make the non-observance of them an error of faith. Keeping man's law does not make a Christian, not keeping it does not make a non-Christian, although it is not right to despise wantonly and without cause what the mass of men believe and keep. On the other hand, it is tyrannous and inhuman, nay devilish, without cause to burden, worry, and oppress even one Chris-

[1] See Vol. II, p. 439, note. [2] Migne Ed., xlii, 519 ff.

tian with man-made laws, not to speak of a larger number or of the whole church.

Therefore I would not interfere with those who desire to keep the pope's and other man-made laws, and would only prevent, if I could, the suppression thereby of faith and of God's Word. But I cannot keep silent when they make a terror and a burden out of them and brand as damnable heretics all those who do not keep them, even if they hold to the articles of faith. Emser here admits that I do not attack even one article of faith, and yet he denies that I am a Christian. In baptism we have sworn allegiance to Christ, not to the pope, and if Christ leads us into the laws of the emperor or into the laws, authority, and power of men, into prison, death, and all sufferings, we are in duty bound to follow His leading. The pope, too, has sworn to teach and practice not his own word but the word of Christ. If he does not do this, he is a thief and a murderer, as Christ himself calls the wolves, John x. Let us now listen to some of his lies.

John 10:1, 8

Emser's Lies

The first lie is, that I want to cut off the head of the church and afterward physic the body.[1] This is an inspiration of his own in which he delights just as he delights in his spear and dagger. For in that book[2] I said nothing concerning the papacy itself, but spoke only of its degeneration and reformation. It is true, under their urging and driving, I did write in other books[3] that the papacy is not of divine origin, and I think I proved it—without Emser's thanks. In so doing I have not rejected the pope, as this liar Emser maintains. My books give clear evidence of it. If that had been my intention at the time, what reason did I have for advising the nobility to reform the papacy?

---

[1] Emser's words were: "He would not be a physician, but a knave and a murderer, who, when called upon to help a sick man, would first of all cut off his head, after which all the medicine would do the rest of the body no good. See, my dear Germans, Luther acts just that way and his very first aim is to cut off the head of Christendom." ENDERS, L. u. E., i, 18.

[2] Open Letter to the Christian Nobility. See Vol. II, pp. 61 ff.

[3] Particularly in The Papacy at Rome. See Vol. I, pp. 337 ff.

That proves that I was willing to retain the pope; otherwise I would have had to speak not of a reform but of the destruction of the papacy.

And if the pope should be reduced to the status of other bishops, which will not happen before judgment day, for Christ Himself must remove so great an enemy of His whom we cannot reform—the Church's head would not be cut off thereby, as Emser lyingly prates. He thinks he has established the proposition that the pope is the head of the Church. He still has a long way to go. Christ is the head of the Church. The pope has oftimes been a heretic and a knave, so that it is scandalous of Emser to make a heretic and a knave the head of the Church; that is far worse than to cut off the Church's head. The pope, too, dies, like any other man, and yet the Church does not live without a head; for even as she lives without ever ceasing to be, so her head, too, must live forever.

Emser lies again when he says that I wish the laity might wash their hands in the blood of the priests.[1] His holy priesthood and Christian love seeks naught but to kindle a fire,[2] and if I were dead he could give out such lies as the solemn truth, as happened in the case of Hus. I wrote against Sylvester[3] *per contentionem*,[4] as this noble poet and rhetorician well knows; I said, if heretics are to be burned, why not rather attack the pope and his adherents with the sword and wash our hands in their blood, if he teaches what Sylvester writes, namely, that the Holy Scriptures derive their authority from the pope. And since I do not approve of burning the heretics,[5] I likewise do not approve of killing any Christian. I

[1] Emser's accusation: "Luther has heretofore, in his other books, exhorted the common people most diligently to wash their hands in the blood of the priests." ENDERS, *L. u. E.*, i, 16.

[2] To burn Luther like Hus.

[3] Prierias. See Vol. I, p. 338, note.

[4] A term in rhetoric meaning a contrasting of one thought with another.

[5] "To burn heretics is opposing the will of the Holy Spirit," Luther's *Grund und Ursach aller Artikel*, etc. *Weimar Ed.*, vii, 439.

know very well that it is not in accord with the Gospel. I simply showed what they deserved if heretics deserve to be burned. It is not at all necessary to attack you with the sword. The nobility and the temporal power can easily deal with such effeminate and childish people through a letter and command; if they will only treat your tyrannical swagger and worthless bans with contempt and say to you, Thus must it be, you would have to obey, although your tactics with your burnings and bans, your raging and raving against the plain truth, look as if you were eager to stir up another Bohemian episode and bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy which is going the rounds that the priests are to be slain. If such destruction should come upon you, you must not blame me—just keep on, the road you are on leads right to it. Where one cannot advise, one cannot help. You will know very quickly whether you can end the game in that manner, even though it were to rain and snow naught but bishops, Emsers, Ecks, and popes. I hope you realize that no one shall destroy the pope but yourselves, even his own creatures, as the prophet has said.

But tell me, dear Emser, since you dare to put it down on paper that it is right and neccessary to burn heretics and think that this does not soil your hands with Christian blood, why should it not also be right to take you, Sylvester, the pope, and all your adherents and put you to a most shameful death? Since you dare to publish a doctrine that is not only heretical but antichristian, which all the devils would not venture to utter—that the Gospel must be confirmed by the pope, that its authority is bound up with the pope's authority, and that what is done by the pope is done by the church. What heretic has ever thus at one stroke condemned and destroyed God's Word? Therefore I still declare and maintain that, if heretics deserve the stake, you and the pope ought to be put to death a thousand times. But I would not have it done. Your judge is not far off, He will find you without fail and without delay.

Do not grow weary with waiting. Yet I would rather that you forestalled Him with sorrow and repentance. To this may God help you, Amen. But I would also that the Roman courtiers, if they will not stop in any other way, be stopped by force, like other thieves and robbers.

Your extravagant assertion that I bring shame upon the priesthood; your claim that St. Paul was ordained by the apostles and St. Peter wore a tonsure; your pouring forth of useless words about ordination and the priestly estate; your allegation that "spiritual" has three meanings, namely, spirituale, ecclesiasticum, religiosum, and that not all Christians are spiritual, spirituales--all these I pass by, lest I make myself as ridiculous as you. For you might say that the laying on of hands meant something besides ordination. Who could prevent this, since you are determined to deal only in lies, like the preachers who say that St. Bartholomew prayed the rosary and the psalter of Our Lady? Here I need no logic. Spirituales I call spiritual and godly Christians; ecclesiasticum and religiosum I do not recognize in this discussion. I thought that here at last the bared sword was to strike me with the blade, and lo! there is neither scabbard, nor sword, nor man.

Of the same sort is your lie, that I have made all laymen to be bishops and priests and spiritual in such a way that they may at once without a proper call perform the functions of the office. Pious as you are, you suppress my accompanying words, that no one shall undertake what he has no call to do except in case of extreme need. And what else shall I say? For one lie crowds another in your book. I am afraid you will kill yourself with lying, blaspheming, hating, and raving. Aforetimes it was a pleasure to write against heretics, because even though they erred, they were honest folk who avoided lies and held to the subject. My persecutors drop the subject and, like knaves, give themselves only to lies. In order to avoid the weariness of hearing nothing but your lies, let

us turn to something useful, the teaching concerning the letter and the spirit, which is the chief thing in your book.

The Letter and the Spirit

2 Cor. 3:6 St. Paul says, II Corinthians iv: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." This my Emser explains to mean that the Scriptures have a two-fold meaning, an external sense and a secret sense, which he calls the literal and the spiritual. The literal sense is supposed to kill and the spiritual to give life. In this he builds on the teaching of Origen,[1] Dionysius,[2] and some others, and thinks he has hit the mark squarely and does not need even to look at the clear Scriptures, since he has the teachings of men. He would like me to imitate him, to abandon the Scriptures and likewise accept the teachings of men. That is something I will not do, although I, too, labored under that error for a time, and I desire to take this opportunity to show clearly how Origen, Jerome,[3] Dionysius, and some others were in the wrong, and how Emser builds his house on the sand, and that it is always necessary to compare the writings of the fathers with the Scripture, and to judge them according to its light.

In the first place, if their opinion were right, that the spiritual sense giveth life and the literal sense killeth, we should be obliged to confess that all sinners are holy and all the saints are sinners; nay, Christ Himself with all the angels must at the same time be both living and dead. This we shall make so clear that even Emser with all his ability to lie shall not be able to contradict it. We will
Gal. 4:22 take the passage from St. Paul in Galatians iv, where according to the literal sense, the letter, it is stated that Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, by two wives, Sarah and Hagar. This is the sense accepted by Christ, God the Holy Spirit, and all the angels and saints. They hold that what the literal sense conveys here is true. And

[1] See Vol. II, p. 190. [2] See Vol. II, p. 275, note. [3] See Vol. II, p. 400.

it is indeed true. Well, Emser, where is your Origen now? If you are really the man who fights not with the scabbard but strikes with the blade, speak up now and say that the letter and the literal sense kill Christ and the Holy Spirit together with all the angels and saints. Can a man say anything more blasphemous than Emser does in his madness, that all the truth in the Scripture kills and destroys?

Again, that Abraham signifies Christ, the two women the two Testaments, the two sons the people of the two Testaments, as St. Paul interprets, this is, as you say, the spiritual meaning. But this meaning is held not only by the saints but also by the worst sinners, yea even by the devils in hell. Come right out into the open, my Emser, strike away with the blade and say that all the devils and knaves are holy and have the life which the spirit giveth. Now be honest and confess that when you take this trick away from Origen, Dionysius, Jerome, and many others there is nothing left of them. Are not the Scriptures clearer on this point than all the fathers? Why, I try them, weigh them, judge them, vanquish them all in such manner that no one can gainsay it, by using the very text from St. Paul on which they have taken their stand, namely, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Why should I add any glosses to it? Is not the text itself so clearly against them that everyone is caught and must say, "Yea."

Gal. 4:24

2 Cor. 3:6

In this way we must interpret all the Scriptures, even the ancient types. For instance, the Jews were forbidden to eat swine or hare because neither swine nor hare cheweth the cud.[1] This is the literal sense. Thus it was understood by David, all the holy prophets and by Christ himself, together with his disciples, and if they had not thus understood and observed it, they would have set themselves against God. Why did the letter not kill them? Again, that the swine signify the carnal teachings or whatever other

[1] Lev. 11 : 6, 7 says: "Ye shall not eat of the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; and of the swine, **though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud.**"

spiritual sense one wishes to apply can be understood even by those who live in mortal sin, and by the devils even more easily. Why does not the spirit give life to them? Where are you, O knight with the mighty Leipzig sword? My dear man, go and write a little more about me, especially how I have praised the ceremonies, saying that they are sanctae, justae, bonae, a bono Deo datae.[1] Truly, you must now see and yourself admit what I have told you, that you do not have an inkling of the meaning of "spirit" and "letter" in the Scriptures. You had better tend to your business and let the Scriptures alone. See how little it helps to quote many writers and to build on what they say.

Rom. 7:14 Furthermore, St. Paul says, Romans vii: "The divine law is spiritual, but I am carnal." He cites one of the ten commandments, namely, the Non concupisces, Thou shalt not covet, and in an extended and skilful argument shows how that same spiritual law killeth. What will you do here, my Emser? Where are you, O man of the spear and of the dagger and of the edged sword? St. Paul here says that the spiritual law killeth, but you say that the spiritual sense giveth life. Come, pipe up, show your skill: what is the literal, and what the spiritual sense in this commandment, Non concupisces? Surely you cannot deny that no other sense can be taken out of these words than that given by their literal meaning. Paul here speaks of the evil lusts of the flesh and yet he calls this law spiritual and maintains that it killeth. And you say, it were better to read a poet's tale than the literal sense of the Scriptures. This is St. Paul's opinion, and he who finds in this commandment any other sense than this literal sense concerning evil lusts finds no meaning in it at all. How well Emser accords with St. Paul: like a donkey singing a duet with a nightingale. All the commandments of God must be treated in the same way, whether they refer to ceremonies or other matters, small or great. It is plain

[1] Holy, just, good, given by a good God.

how pitifully Emser has erred in this thing and has shown that he knows less about the Scriptures than a child.

Besides, his mistaken and wrong interpretation is a dishonor to the entire sacred Scriptures and a disgrace to himself. All the labor and diligence of the teachers have no other object than to find the literal sense which alone they regard as valid, so that Augustine declares: Figura nihil probat,[1] that is, Emser's "spiritual sense" is not valid, but the other sense is the highest, best, strongest; in short, it is the whole substance, essence, and foundation of Scripture, so that if the literal sense were taken away, all the Scriptures would be nothing. The spiritual sense, which Emser magnifies, is not valid in any controversy. It does not hold water, nor would it matter if no one knew anything about it, as I proved in my book On the Papacy.[2] For even if no one knew that Aaron is a type of Christ, it would not matter, neither can it be proven. We must let Aaron be simply Aaron in the ordinary sense, except where the Spirit Himself gives a new interpretation, which is then a new literal sense, as St. Paul, for instance, in the Epistle to the Hebrews makes Aaron to be Christ. Heb. 9 and 10

How can you be so bold, Emser, as to make the assertion that this literal sense killeth? You are floundering about in ignorance of the import of your own words, when you prate that it is better to read one of Virgil's poems than to read the literal sense of the Scriptures. Thereby you condemn the entire Scripture and give preference to the lies and fictions of the devil over the holy Word of God, which has no other valid meaning than the one you call deadly and teach men to shun. But this is smiting with the blade and a correct Emserian spiritual interpretation; thus must the heretic Luther be struck! Turn the tables, Emser, and you will find that the sense which you call spiritual and life-giving, is the very one—if you cling only to it and let the literal sense go—for which it would be better to exchange the poets'

[1] See Augustine, De unitate ecclesiae, 5, 8. (Migne Ed., xliii, 396.)
[2] Vol. I, pp. 337, ff.

tales, for the spiritual sense is unsafe, and the Scriptures exist without it, but they cannot exist without the literal sense. They were right aforetimes who prohibited the books of Origen, for he paid too much attention to this spiritual sense, which was unnecessary, and he neglected the necessary literal sense. For that means the destruction of Scripture and will never make sound theologians. Such are developed only by the one, true, original, and native sense of the words.

The Holy Spirit is the plainest writer and speaker in heaven and earth, and therefore His words cannot have more than one, and that the very simplest, sense, which we call the literal, ordinary, natural, sense. That the things indicated by the simple sense of His simple words should signify something further and different, and therefore one thing should always signify another, is more than a question of words or of language. For the same is true of all other things outside of the Scriptures, since all of God's works and creatures are living signs and words of God, as St. Augustine and all the teachers declare. But we are not on that account to say that the Scriptures or the Word of God have more than one meaning.

A painted picture of a living man signifies a person, without need of a word of explanation. But that does not cause you to say that the word "picture" has a twofold sense, a literal sense, meaning the picture, and a spiritual sense, meaning the living person. Now, although the things described in the Scriptures have a further significance, the Scriptures do not on that account have a twofold sense, but only the one which the words give. Beyond that we can give permission to speculative minds to seek and chase after the various significations of the things mentioned, provided they take care not to go too far or too high, as sometimes happens to the chamois hunters and did happen to Origen. It is much surer and safer to abide by the words in their simple sense; they furnish the real pasture and right dwelling-places for all minds.

Now see the lofty way in which Emser comes along with his double Bible and brings uncertainty upon both parts. When St. Peter says: "We are all priests," he declares, this is said in the spiritual, not in the literal, sense. But when I ask, why not in the literal sense? Emser answers: Because the literal sense killeth. He does not understand one iota of what he says, nor does he see how he himself brings shame upon his own priesthood by teaching clearly that it is not the living, spiritual priesthood, but the literal, harmful, deadly priesthood, so that it would indeed be better to be a mythical priest than such a literal priest. If whatever is not spirit has no life and has no spiritual meaning, it must surely be harmful, deadly, and worse than heathenish, and must be understood literally, if indeed the high, super-spiritual Emserian theology is to stand. 'Twere well if a smith remained a smith and a poetaster stayed a poetaster, and left the wielding of the spiritual sword to such as have strong fists and powerful arms. The Scriptures do not tolerate such a separation of the letter and the spirit as Emser so wantonly teaches; they know but one priesthood and have but one meaning. 1 Pet. 2:9

Many sensible men have made the mistake of calling the "letter" a figure of speech, Augustine among them. As if I were to say, Emser is a stupid ass, and a simple-minded man hearing these words, would understand that Emser were actually an ass with long ears and four legs. The man would have been deceived by the letter, whereas I wanted to convey, through the figure of speech, what a blockhead Emser is. Figures of speech are a subject of study in the schools and are called in Greek s c h e m a t a, and in Latin f i g u r a e, because they are a decking out of speech, even as you adorn the body with jewels. The Scriptures are full of such figures of speech, particularly the books of the prophets. John and Christ in Luke iii call the Jews g e n i m i n a v i p e r a r u m, generation of vipers. St. Paul in Colossians ii calls them dogs. Psalm cix says: "The dew of thy children shall come out Luke 3:7 Phil. 3:2 Ps. 110:3

Ps. 110:2 of the womb of the morning." Again: "God shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion." That means the children of Christ are born, not physically from a mother's womb, but without the work of man, like the dew from heaven, out of the morning of the Christian church. Further, Matt. 5:13 f. Christ says, Matthew v: "Ye are the salt of the earth and the light of the world." But this is not what St. Paul means by the word "letter." This belongs to the study of grammar in the schools.

If you can humble yourself and not despise me altogether, I will do what out of Christian duty I owe to my enemy, and not withhold from you God's gift to me. I will give you better instruction in this matter—I say this without boasting—than any you have received heretofore from any teacher except St. Augustine, if perchance you have read his De Spiritu et Litera.[1] None of the others will teach you aright. You will not find a single letter in the whole Bible that agrees with what you, together with Origen and Jerome, call the spiritual sense. St. Paul calls it a mystery, a secret, hidden sense, wherefore the earliest of the fathers called it an anagogical, that is, a more remote sense, a meaning by itself, and sometimes also an allegory, St. Paul himself using the latter term in Gal. 4:24 Galatians iv. But that is not yet the "spirit," although the Spirit has given it as well as the letter and all the gifts, 1 Cor. 14:2 as we see from I Corinthians xiv: "The Spirit speaketh mysteries." Some, however, because they did not understand this matter, ascribed a fourfold sense to Scripture, the literal, the allegorical, the anagogical, and the tropological, for which there is no foundation whatever.

It is therefore not well named the literal sense, for by letter Paul means something quite different. They do much better who call it the grammatical, historical sense. It would be well to call it the speaking or language 1 Cor. 14:2 sense as St. Paul does in I Corinthians xiv, because it is

[1] De spiritu et litera, ad Marcellinum, A. D. 412. (Migne Ed., xliv, 199ff.)

understood by everybody in the sense of the spoken language. He who hears the words that Abraham had two sons by two wives, receives them in that sense and has no further thoughts than those indicated by the language, until the Spirit goes farther and reveals the hidden sense concerning Christ and the two covenants and peoples. Such hidden meanings are then called mysteries, just as St. Paul in Ephesians v calls the union of Christ and the Church in one body a mystery, although the letter of the Scriptures in Genesis ii speaks of man and wife. Great care is necessary however, that not everyone shall of himself invent mysteries, as some have done and still do. The Spirit must do it Himself or one must prove them by Scripture, as I said in the treatise on the Papacy.[1]

Gal. 4:22

Eph. 5:32

Gen. 2:24

Therefore the text of St. Paul in II Corinthians iv, "The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life," squares with this twofold sense, the spiritual and the literal, as perfectly as Emser's head squares with philosophy and theology. How and why Origen, Jerome, and some other fathers also turned and twisted this text in the same manner I will not discuss now. It is generally known and can easily be proved that they treated other passages in the same way in order to refute the Jews and the heretics. But we ought to excuse them for that and not follow them here like unclean animals who gulp down everything they find and make no distinctions in the work and teaching of the fathers, until at last we follow them only in those things wherein the beloved fathers—as human beings—erred, and depart from them in the things they did well. I could prove this easily from the teachings and the lives of all who now are considered the very worthiest among them.

2 Cor. 3:6

Let us now consider the text concerning the letter and the spirit. In that passage St. Paul does not write one iota about these two senses, but declares that there are two kinds of preaching or ministries. One is that of the Old Testament, the other that of the New Testament. The

2 Cor. 3:6

Two Ministries

[1] Vol. I, p. 365.

Old Testament preaches the letter, the New Testament the spirit. But in order that I may not, like Goat Emser, tell my own dream, let us hear in the clear words of the apostle himself that he speaks of the ministers or preachers of the New Testament in II Corinthians iv. They read as follows: "Ye are an epistle of Christ, through our ministry, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. Therefore we needed not epistles of commendation to you. And such trust have we to God through Christ, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers and preachers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," etc.

2 Cor. 3:3 ff.

Is that not a clear statement concerning preaching? We see clearly that St. Paul speaks of two tables and two kinds of preaching. The tables of Moses were of stone, on which the law was inscribed by God's finger, Exodus xx. The tables of Christ, or the epistles of Christ, as he calls them here, are the hearts of Christians, in which are written, not letters as on Moses' tables, but the spirit of God, through the preaching of the Gospel and the ministry of the apostles. Now, just what does this mean? The letter is naught else but the divine law and commandment which is given in the Old Testament, through Moses, and is taught and proclaimed through Aaron's priesthood. It is called "letter" because it is written with letters on the tables of stone and in books. A letter it must ever remain; it never gives anything except its command. For no man is made better by the law, but only worse, for the law does not give help or grace; it merely commands and demands that a man do what a man never willingly does, and indeed, cannot do. But the spirit, which is divine grace, gives strength and power to the heart, yea, creates a new man, who grows to love God's commandments and does with joy all that he ought to do.

Exod. 20:1 ff.; 24:12; 31:18

This spirit cannot be contained in any letter, it cannot be written with ink, on stone, or in books, as the law can be, but is written only in the heart, a living writing of the Holy Spirit who uses no means at all. Therefore St. Paul calls it Christ's epistle, not Moses' tables; it is written not with ink, but with the Spirit of God. By this spirit or grace a man does what the law commands and satisfies it. In this manner he becomes free from the letter that kills him and lives through the grace of the Spirit. Everyone that does not have this grace of the living Spirit is dead, although he make a fine show in the outward keeping of the whole law. For this reason the apostle says of the law that it kills, that it makes no one alive and would keep one eternally in bondage to death unless grace come to set him free and to give him life.

These, then, are the two ministries. The priests, preachers, and ministries of the Old Testament deal with naught else but the law of God; they have as yet no open proclamation of the spirit and of grace. But in the New Testament all the preaching is of grace and the spirit given to us through Christ. For the preaching of the New Testament is naught else but an offering and presentation of Christ to all men out of the pure mercy of God, in such wise that all who believe in Him receive God's grace and the Holy Spirit, by which all sin is forgiven, all law is fulfilled, they become God's children, and have eternal salvation. Therefore St. Paul here calls the New Testament proclamation ministerium spiritus, a ministry of the spirit, i. e., a ministry by which the spirit and grace of God are presented and offered to all who by the law have been burdened, killed, and made to long for grace. The law he calls ministerium literae, a ministry of the letter, i. e., a ministry which offers nothing but the letter or the law, that produces no life nor a fulfilment of the law whose demands no man can satisfy. Therefore it must needs remain a letter, and as a letter it can accomplish nothing more than to kill a man, i. e., it

shows him what he ought to do and yet cannot do; this makes him realize that he is in disgrace and dead before God, whose commandments he does not keep and yet must keep.

2 Cor. 3:6 This makes it clear that the word of the apostle, "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life," might be expressed in other words, thus: "The law killeth, but the grace of God giveth life," or: "Grace gives help and does all that the law demands and of itself cannot do." For this reason St. Paul calls God's law a law of death and of sin, and declares,

Rom. 8:2 ff. Romans viii: "The law of the living spirit in Christ has redeemed me from the law of sin and death. For the law could not help me—it made things worse through the wickedness of the sinful flesh—therefore God sent his own son into our flesh, and let him become like unto our sinful flesh and thus blotted out our sins through Christ's assumption of sin in his suffering, that thereby the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Here we see how excellently St. Paul teaches us to understand aright, Christ, God's grace, and the New Testament. It is all comprised in the fact that Christ came unto our sin, bore it in His body on the cross, and blotted it out, so that all who believed on Him were rid of their sin and received grace henceforth to satisfy God's law and the letter that killeth, and thus were made partakers of eternal life. See, that is what is meant by ministerium spiritus, non literae, the preaching of the spirit, the preaching of grace, the preaching of a right indulgence, the preaching of Christ, i. e., the New Testament, of which much could be said if the evil spirit had not blinded the world through the pope, and by man-teaching had led it into the abyss of outermost darkness.

Now we see that all commandments lead unto death, since even divine commandments mean death, for everything that is not spirit or grace means death. It is, therefore, monstrous ignorance to call allegories, tropologies, and the like, spirit. They can all be encompassed in language and do not give life, but grace has no receptacle save the heart. And just as not all men take up this life of the spirit, nay,

most of them let the ministers of the spirit preach and offer them such rich grace in vain, and believe not the Gospel, so likewise not all receive the ministry of the letter or preaching of the law, they do not want to be put under death, i. e., they understand not God's law, and go along without receiving either letter or spirit. And to pursue Goat Emser's blind perversion still further: he thinks we should avoid the letter and flee the death of the letter. That is what happens when one reads only the books of the fathers and puts the Scriptures aside, juggles with spears and daggers, and makes a dense fog of the Scriptures, but a bright light of the teachings of the fathers.

The apostle does not want us to avoid the letter nor to flee its death; in the same passage he laments the fact that for the Jews a veil hangs over the law like the veil on Moses' face, Exodus xxxiv, so that they do not see the letter, its death, and its glory. He wants the letter to be preached and made clear and the veil removed from the face of Moses. And when a man understands rightly the law of God and, with veil removed, looks it squarely in the face, he finds that all the works of man are sinful and nothing is good in them unless the grace of the Spirit enter into them. And this is the real end and purpose of the law, as Paul says, II Corinthians iv: "They could not stedfastly look to the end of the law"; for it seeks to make sinners of all men and sin of all that is in us, and thereby show us our misery, our death, our merit, and lead us to a true knowledge of ourselves, as St. Paul says, Romans vii: "By the law is the knowledge of sin," and in Romans iii: "The Scripture hath concluded all men under sin," so that all the world's tongue might be silenced and it should know that before God no man is righteous without grace, even if he do works of the law.

2 Cor. 3:7

Exod. 34:33ff.

2 Cor. 3:13

Rom. 7:7; 3:20; 7:9; 11:32 Gal. 3:22

They, however, who like the Jews and our sophists together with the pope, want to exalt their good works, and boast of their free will, who will not allow all the works of man to be sin and still find something good in our

nature, are those who do not let Moses' face shine in its glory, who hang a veil before the law and do not look it squarely in the face, who do not let their works be sin and death before God, i. e., they do not want to come to a true knowledge of themselves, nor humble themselves, but bolster up their own pride. Such flee the letter and its true meaning as the Jews fled from the face of Moses, and therefore their understanding is blinded and they never come to the life of the Spirit. It is not possible for anyone to hear the Gospel and be made alive through the grace of the Spirit, who is not willing first to hear the law and be put to death by the letter; for grace is not given to anyone except he thirst for it. Life helps only where there is death, grace only where there is sin, the spirit only where there is the letter—no man can have the one without the other. Therefore what Emser calls the letter and death is in reality but the veil, a gross perversion of the letter, a damnable fleeing from this blessed death. Nay, even this is ascribing too much sense to it, so utterly remote from the Scriptures is this poor blind man, who pretends to fight with the edged sword; methinks he is hacking his own face.

My sincere counsel to such unschooled minds is to quit writing books. For since they bring—in fools' fashion—the words of some fathers, they deceive the poor people, who fall to and hold such errors perhaps all their lives. Such books cannot help doing injury, for which their hair-brained writers are guilty before God. Who will give Emser the grace to counteract the errors and lies of his book, as he ought to do? It would have been better for him, as Christ says, "that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea," rather than that he should write things that are false, harmful, offensive, and, more than that, most grossly pervert the very precious teaching of Christ with his blasphemy and poison and drive the poor people away from it. Woe unto you, Emser! If you had waited

Matt. 18:6

until God had called and driven you to it, He would have been with you in your labors and given you His spirit to enable you to write profitable things. But now you do just what Jeremiah speaks of: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet the prophesied." The spirit of hatred and lying has driven you, therefore your writings are but lies and errors. All I can do is to warn everybody against your poison. If I had not feared for the poor souls, I would not have thought you worthy of an answer, as I did before.[1] Tu enim es ipsa inscitia in his rebus.[2] Jer. 23:21

To come back to our subject. It is indeed true that where only the law is preached and the letter insisted on, as in the Old Testament, and this is not followed by the preaching of the Spirit, there can be only death without life, sin without grace, anguish without comfort. Such preaching produces wretched and captive consciences, and makes men finally despair and die in their sins, and, through this preaching, be eternally damned. This has been done in our day and still is done by the murderous sophists in their summa and confessionalia,[3] in which they drive and torment the people with contrition, confession, penance and satisfaction. Then they teach good works and preach good doctrine as they say, but not once do they hold up the Spirit and Christ to the afflicted consciences; so that now Christ is unknown to all the world, the Gospel lies in a corner, and the whole ministry of the New Testament is suppressed. The best among them are those who explain Moses and the commandments, and of such there are very few. The greater part concern themselves with their mummery and teach the canon law, the pope's law, the doctrines and statutes of men; caught in these meshes, they never get out of them, ever

[1] See his preceding writings against Emser, pp. 282 and 289.
[2] For you are stupidity itself in these things.
[3] Manuals of Confession. Cf. Vol. I, pp. 90ff., Vol. II, pp. 247ff.

2 Tim. 3:7 learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth, even as St. Paul declares.

If God's law brings ruin and condemnation, as St. Paul here declares, even if it be preached and explained to perfection, how can the sophists and this Goat claim to make people righteous and increase good works by means of the teachings of men and man-made laws? Verily, since the law kills and condemns everything that is not grace and spirit, they accomplish no more with their many laws and works than to give much occasion to the law to kill and condemn. All their trouble and labor is in vain; the more they do, the worse they become, because it is impossible to satisfy the law of God with teachings and works; the Spirit alone can satisfy its demands. Therefore
Ps. 10:7 the Scripture speaks of all their ado as A v e n e t A m a l, labor and trouble, and the company of these lost men is
Hos. 4:15 called B e t h a v e n, the church or company of trouble;
Amos 7:16 again, in Amos vii, B e t h i s h a c, the church of deception, because they deceive everybody by their false teaching, work, and life.

My counsel therefore was and is, that we do not make a pretense of reforming these man-made teachings and the canon law, as Emser foolishly suggests, for that is impossible, but that we burn them up, cast them out, destroy them, overturn them entirely, or at least as much of them as we can, and then restore simply the two ministries of the letter and the spirit, which cannot be exercised unless the teachings of men are put away. It is surely proper that they give way to God's letter and spirit, to which they are a hindrance and obstruction. To preach the letter and the spirit gives us more to do than we are equal to, even if we began at the beginning of the world and kept on until doomsday.

Though we now live in the New Testament and should have only the preaching of the spirit, yet we are still clothed in flesh and blood, and therefore the preaching of the letter is needed too, first of all through the law to bring the

people unto death and destroy their self-confidence, that they may know themselves and become hungry for the spirit and thirsty for grace, and so to prepare them for the preaching of the spirit, as it is written of St. John that he prepared the people for Christ by preaching repentance, which was the ministry of the letter, and then led them unto Christ and said: "Behold the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the whole world," which was the ministry of the spirit. These are the two works of God commended so often in the Scriptures: He kills and makes alive, He wounds and He heals, He destroys and builds up, He condemns and pardons, He brings low and lifts up, He rebukes and brings to honor, as it is recorded in Deuteronomy xxxii, I Samuel ii, Psalm cxi, and other places. These works He performs through the two ministries, the one by the letter, the second by the Spirit. By the letter no one can abide in the presence of His wrath, by the spirit no one can perish in the presence of His grace. O what an abundance of riches is here! One could go on speaking about it forever, and yet the pope and the precepts of men have hidden it and fastened an iron curtain before it, that it cries to heaven. Amen.

Matt. 3:1 ff.

John 1:29

Deut. 32:39 1 Sam. 2:6 ff. Ps. 113:7

This makes very plain to everyone what St. Paul means in Romans vii, when he says: "The law of God is good, just, holy and spiritual," and still is a letter that kills, because it shows how good, righteous, holy, spiritual, and equal to all its demands a man should be, and yet he is found to be wicked, unrighteous, sinful, carnal, and unequal to any demand of the law. And this failure of man to keep the law brings upon him eternal death, the wrath and displeasure of God, who rightly insists on the fulfilment of His law to the last dot and letter. By the mirror thus held up to him by the letter, or the law, man comes to know himself, that he is dead and under God's displeasure. This knowledge alarms him and causes him to seek the spirit, that by him he may be made good, righteous, holy, spiritual, in all things as the law demands, and be brought

Rom. 7:12

to God's grace. Then he loves the law, the letter no longer kills him, but he lives in the spirit, fulfilling the demands of the law. Nay, he no longer needs a law to teach him, for he knows it by heart, since through the spirit every requirement of the law has become his very nature and being.

We conclude this discussion with the fine sentence in St. Augustine's comment on Psalm xvii, where he gives us this happy and striking explanation: "The letter is none other than the law apart from grace." And so we may also say: The spirit is none other than grace apart from the law. Where the letter is, or the law without grace, there is no end of making, teaching, performing of laws, and all is fruitless, for no one is made better by it; it all remains dead in the letter. But where the spirit of God is, there is liberty, as St. Paul says. No teacher or law is necessary, and yet a man does everything that ought to be done. A person with good, strong eyes need not be taught how to see, he can see by himself much better than with any assistance teaching could provide. But if the man is diseased, his freedom is gone and enough instruction cannot be found to help guard and protect him; every use of the eyes must be made a matter of special concern and rule to help him see. This is what St. Paul means in I Tim. i: "The law is not made for a righteous man," for through the spirit he has met its every demand. He means the very same thing when he says: "God has made us ministers of the spirit, not of the letter," namely, that in the New Testament there shall be in fact only the preaching of grace and not of the law, and men shall be made truly righteous through the spirit.

2 Cor. 3:17

1 Tim. 1:9

2 Cor. 3:6

Where are you now, O Goliath Emser, with your spear and your sword? You have girded on this sword only to have your own head cut off with it. How could you have found, in the whole Bible, a text that would serve me so well against you as this one on which you rest your argument and hope?

That you strike with the blade is your boast, but you have not even touched so much as your scabbard or the knob on the hilt. Do you see how "spiritually" you have tortured this text and wrenched it to make it say that the letter signifies the literal sense and the spirit the spiritual sense, and then you bid us flee the letter and death! What a skilled swordsman you are! What a pleasant little bout you have had with the famous gladiator!

Now that I have unbuckled your sword and cut off the head of your insolence, we will come back to your spear, dagger, and your whole armor. I hope to drag out a dead Goliath and display his head, that everyone may gaze on your wanton threats and Goliath-like blasphemies. Let us see where your idol, the pope, will be with his laws, and the whole army of these Philistines with their man-made doctrines.

The Pope and his Laws

If the pope, with his bishops and priests, is a pious, faithful successor and heir of the apostles, I trust he is bound to exercise their ministry and to preach the spirit, in accordance with this word of St. Paul. But if he is to preach the spirit, he must not preach laws, but freedom even from the laws of God, as I have said. Now I ask, where do the pope and the priesthood come from, who never preach this spirit nor give the letter its glory, but everywhere urge their own law, the canon law, precepts of men, consecrated salt and water, vigils, masses, and any other of their mummery they may drag in. They befog the law of God and bring out again the veil of Moses which the apostles had taken away; they take the world captive in their laws, blot out Christian liberty, destroy the spirit, and drive away grace. And in return for giving us these abominations they take away all our money and property, rob us, and steal from us. St. Paul declares that through the preaching of the spirit even the glory of Moses, i. e., the law of God, shall be done away, so that only the glory of the spirit may shine in the Church. But the pope not merely reintroduces Moses—even that would be a blessing—

but again hangs the veil before the face of Moses, nay, with his innumerable laws he builds a stone wall before him, so that now neither letter nor spirit is known or preached, but mere inventions of human doctrine, of which Christ says in Matthew xv: "In vain do they serve me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; thereby they draw near unto me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Matt. 15:8 f.

Whence comes a pope like that with his priests? He surely is not the successor of the apostles, for with his doctrines he destroys their ministry and teaching. This is a strong word of St. Paul: "We are ministers or preachers of the spirit, not of the letter"; but what says the pope? "We are preachers neither of the spirit nor of the letter, but of our own dream, which is not written anywhere." From whence cometh he? I will tell you. Christ calls him by name in Matthew xxiv: "When ye shall see the abomination in the holy city (i. e., the pope with his own teachings sitting in the Church on the seat of the apostles), whoso readeth, let him understand. For there shall arise many false teachers and prophets and Christians, who shall say: Lo, here is Christ, or there, and shall deceive many," i. e., they will proclaim the human doctrines whereby men seek Christ here or there and hope to find Him through works and ceremonies, although He will let Himself be found only in the heart, in the spirit and in faith, in any place, at any time, by any one. St. Paul also says in II Thessalonians: "That man of sin, the son of perdition, is revealed through the working of Satan." And in Daniel vii we read: "At the end of the Roman empire a king shall arise, whose power shall consist in his demeanor and appearance (i. e., in doctrines of men that teach only external customs and demeanor, for instance, the bishops', priests', and monks' manner of life, which consists in their garb and external works and demeanor). He shall destroy wonderfully and through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand and have under-

2 Cor. 3:6

Matt. 24:15, 23 f.

2 Thess. 2:3, 9

Dan. 8:23 ff.

standing to make and to multiply the commandments of men," etc. Of this more anon.

But now hear what God says further of your idol and your precepts of men: St. Paul writes in Colossians ii: "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." And this is again explained farther on: "If ye died with Christ, why do ye subject yourselves to ordinances that teach you: Touch not this, taste not that, wear not this, handle not that, which are all things that perish in the using, which things are after the commandments and doctrines of men, and have a show of wisdom, but are a superstition and a false humility, designed for rigorous discipline of the body, but pampering their sensual, beastly estate and of no value whatever." What becomes now of the blade of the Goat-spirit? Does not St. Paul, in masterly fashion, expose the pope's, bishops', priests', and monks' doings, which consist only in this, that one does not eat this, another does not drink that, one does not touch money, another does not wear this garment or that color, and so forth. They have based their spirituality on external things that perish in the using and give them merely the semblance and varnish of holiness. Yet by these things they deceive everybody and through their mock-humility succeed in making the world subject to themselves. That is the king whose strength is in external appearance, but not in God's armor nor sword nor Word, Daniel viii.

Col. 2:8

Col. 2:20

Dan. 8:23

Christ speaks of this, too, in Matthew vii: "Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." What is sheep's clothing if not this external holiness in garments, shoes, tonsures, eating, drinking, days and places—temporal things, all of them. But inwardly, in the sphere of faith that confers eternal holiness and gives possession of eternal things, they are nothing at all, but rather its destroyers and ravening wolves, so that St. Paul also admits in I

Matt. 7:15

2 Tim. 3:5, 7 Timothy ii: "They have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof, ever teaching and learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." If all this, therefore, should be abolished and changed, as it ought to be, what would become of the papacy, which is built solely on these things? Christ Himself must abolish it by coming with the final judgment; nothing else will avail. But this is plain to us, that we must shun the sheep's clothing, that is to say, the laws and works of men.

Gal. 1:8 Again, St. Paul says in Galatians i: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." And in Colossians ii: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men and not after Christ." Here St. Paul desires that nothing shall be taught except what is found in the Scriptures. What say you to that, Emser? In reply you will perhaps bring SS. Augustine, Benedict, Francis, Dominic, and other fathers who were all holy, but nevertheless taught and observed the doctrines of men. My answer is, for me they do not outweigh the Scriptures; God's Word is higher than all the angels, saints, and every creature. Nor can any one say that those saints never erred; who will be our surety then, that they did not err in this, since even Aaron and all the elect must be deceived, and I have the clear Scripture on my side. I will and must be convinced only by Scripture, not by the uncertain life and teachings of men, be they ever so holy.

Col. 2:7 f.

The Saints' Rules Then, too, those saints observed their rules as a matter of freedom and left them free for others, so that he who desired could join their mode of life and of his own free will could leave it again. But if they should have erred so greatly as to make a commandment and law of it, which I strongly doubt, I would include them among those of whom Ezekiel said: "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet," and count them among the number of those whom Christ

Ezek. 14:9

mentions in Matthew xxiv, where he says that the rule of antichrist shall show such signs and wonders that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect. Thus the holy fathers themselves may have marvelously escaped the pitfalls of human teaching by the spirit of their faith, and yet all their followers be lost, who look only to their works and teachings and neglect their spirit and faith. But your pope, who should leave such rules as free as the saints had them, turns them by his official sanction into obligatory, eternal commands and laws, just as he does with his own laws. Matt. 24:24

I think you know that in the Old Testament the people were under as great obligation to hear their priests as we are today to hear ours. Yet God would not suffer them to teach their own doctrines; He forbade it. Therefore Moses and all the prophets emphasized so frequently the little word vocem meam, my voice, and in Deuteronomy iv God commands: "Ye shall not add unto my words nor diminish ought from them"; in Zachariah ii He says: "The people should seek the law and teaching of God at the mouth of the priest, for he is the messenger of God." In Matthew xxiii Christ says, "Whatsoever the scribes and Pharisees bid you do, that observe and do, for they sit in Moses' seat," i. e., because they teach the law of Moses. All those who teach their own law are denounced everywhere in the Scriptures as false prophets, graven images, deceivers, seducers, wolves, raging beasts; of them He says in Jeremiah xxiii: "They caused my people to err, yet I sent them not nor commanded them." They were all sent, i. e., appointed as priests, and by virtue of their office they were teachers of the law, but they had no command to teach their own law. Again in Jeremiah xxv: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they preached; I gave them no command, yet they taught. But if they had stood in my counsel and had caused my people to hear my words, then I could have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings." Deut. 4:2 Mal. 2:7 Matt. 23:2 Jer. 23:32 Jer. 23:21 f.

The Anti-christ

Whither, O pope, to escape these words? Where are you, Emser, with your assertion that one must have more than God's Word, and your newly invented dagger and spear? God here declares that we must teach nothing save His Word, otherwise He can turn no one from evil; this is to teach us that when something over and above God's Word is put forth, it is surely a seductive, unchristian error, a lie and a cheat, which only hinders God's work and grace in us. This is the reason why St. Paul calls anti-christ the man of sin and the son of perdition, because through his precepts and laws he will turn all the world from God and prevent God and the world from coming together; he shall be a master in sin and all iniquity, and yet he will retain the name and appearance of Christ and call himself Sanctissimus and Vicarius Dei and Caput Ecclesiae,[1] and persecute all who will not obey him. It is easily recognized that the pope more than fits the description.

2 Thess. 2:3 f.

What is the greatest concern of all the prophets but to oppose the teachings of men and to preserve God's Word alone among the people? All idolatry is nothing but the teachings of men, such as the calves of Bethaven, the calf of Aaron, the idol Baal, and others. And who can guard himself sufficiently against such teachings, since even Aaron, who was the high priest, fell away to the golden calf, and Christ says in Matthew xxiv that the outward show and ostentation may deceive the very elect. If the pope had not his large following and the outward show of sanctity, he could not be the antichrist. He must needs have the outward show, and the large following of all the bishops, priests, monks, universities, princes, all the mighty. One thing, however, God will not have him cover up, and there the donkey's ears stick out: he neglects God's Word, does not preach it, and is satisfied when his own teachings are preached; the bird is recognized by his song.[2] Like the beast that John saw in the Apocalypse,

Matt. 24:24

[1] Most holy one; vicar of God; head of the Church. [2] See above, p. 289f.

which had two horns like a lamb, but a voice like a dragon, so the papal hosts look like Christians, but they preach like Satan. Daniel predicted this in chapter xi when he said that antichrist shall not regard the God of his fathers, nor his teachings, nor have woman to wife, but in the place of God shall honor his God Maozim,[1] that is to say, he forbids marriage only as an honor for himself and his papists, and erects in place of God and His Gospel the graven image Maozim, his own decretals and laws and makes spirituality a thing of locality, just as Christ says: "They shall say, here is Christ, or there." Dan 11:37 f. Matt. 24:23

In Jeremiah xix, where the Baal service is described, to whom they even offered their children as burnt offerings in the thought of doing God great service thereby, God says: "I commanded it not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind." This clearly shows that nothing shall be preached or shown the people except that which God wants and commands. But we are certain that the pope, with his papists, has no command from God to offer his own teachings to Christendom, but that it is all a device of the devil to obstruct God, God's law, and the salvation of men. Therefore my Goat should first of all clearly prove that spear and dagger are approved of God. But he is quite satisfied if only the spear is long and the dagger short; it is enough that the latter represents "custom" and the former "teachings of men," and he wants me to let Scripture go and accommodate myself to him. Jer. 19:5

That you may see the super-subtlety of your wisdom, mark this: I knew all about the "teachings of men" and the "custom," which you bring into the field against me. Why

[1] Luther quotes the Vulgate, which here makes a proper noun of the Hebrew word. His German Bible likewise followed the Vulgate. The King James Version translates: "God of forces," with the curious marginal reading, "God of munitions." The Revised Version reads: "God of fortresses," which is also found in one of Luther's comments on this passage. But Luther repeatedly called Maozim the god of the mass. So in a letter concerning secret masses, 1534: "He calls the idol 'Mausim,' using the very letters of the word 'mass.' He evidently would have liked to call it 'mass' outright, had he not been constrained to use words of concealment. But he paints the idol in such a way that we can readily see he means the abominable mass." Erl. Ed., xxxi, 390; also xli, 302.

should I not know them, since I am fighting against them myself! What do you accomplish, O mighty philosopher, when you come at me with that which I fight against, whereas you ought to shield it with other weapons? If I besieged a city with an army and the missiles of my cannon crashed into the walls and fortifications, and then you rose up in wrath to sally forth against me, but did no more than point at the self-same walls and forts which I had bombarded, and utter the hostile cry: Look at them! and pretend thereby to have conquered me—what could I think of you? I would summon a cooper to place a hoop or two around your head, to save it from bursting with such blatant folly. Though you know how I always bring the Scriptures and hurl them against the "teachings of men" and "custom," and will not allow these except when they are founded in Scripture, yet you are so wise as to leave them unprotected by Scripture; you bring them out just as they are and show them to me as if I had never seen them before, and by doing that you think you have won the victory and broken my breastplate; you give ample proof how the dog-days affect you. St. Augustine in his treatise Contra Petilianum Donatistam thought it a great jest when Ticonius hurled the thunders of Scripture against Petilianus, who countered only with the man-teaching of his own forbears.[1] Augustine thought that a most foolish answer. But I, who also hold only to the Scriptures, am to regard Emser's answer as pure and precious truth, though it is without any foundation in Scripture and mere human figment and fancy, with which he bids me defiance and calls it "dagger" and "custom."

[1] Luther is, in reality, quoting from another treatise of Augustine against the Donatists—the schismatics in Africa, who made the validity of the sacraments dependent upon the character of the ministrant—namely, Contra Epistolam Parmeniani. Tichonius, apparently a layman, but well versed in Scripture, revolted from the extreme views of Donatism, and in 372 wrote a book against Parmenian and the stricter Donatists, without abandoning the party. Augustine praises his Scriptural argument, but denounces him for his inconsistency in continuing his allegiance, See Smith and Wace, Dict. of Christian Biography, iv, 192 ff., 1025 f.

The best advice I can give you is, to leave spear and dagger at home and to fight me with the Scriptures, even as I fight you with them. Where is your philosophy which teaches you not to beg the question? In my opinion it is a piece of idiocy and your Aristotle the arch-numskull.[1] This is what a poetaster deserves who essays to be a philosopher and theologian. It is like an ass trying to play a bagpipe.

If the Manichean heresy[2] arose again today and men claimed that the Scriptures were not sufficient, but that the Holy Spirit had raised them up to lead us, how could you and all your papists defend yourselves against them? Would you in that case, too, simply point to your teachings? Or would you say: Hey, too late, we have already found out by ourselves that one must believe and keep more than the Scriptures tell us. How firmly you papists would hold your own against your enemies, when you strengthen them by your own example of a teaching and life not founded on the Scriptures. Is it not ridiculous and shameful that without any urging we confess, nay, we glory in and boast of the fact, that our cause is not founded on the Scriptures? Just as the cuckoo calls his own name, so by these human works outside of Scripture we call ourselves good Christians and all others heretics, even while we admit that they have all the Scripture on their side. If our enemies accused us of such things, and we were not entirely bereft of reason, we would not suffer it for an instant, but would stake life and limb in defence. Are we not justly objects of ridicule, when we frankly ackowledge that the position of our opponents is in the Scriptures and ours is not? What better praise for our enemies and song of shame for ourselves could we chant? Yet such is the egregious folly we spread before the world as wisdom. Truly, 'twere better the scabbards of such valiant warriors were used for the relief of certain bodily necessities.

---

[1] Erzstultus, doubtless suggested by Aristotle's name.

[2] See Vol. II, 439, note.

What was my purpose in all my books but the very thing which Emser acknowledges here and yet complains of with great hue and cry?[1] Did I not also say that the papacy and all its ways rested on man-teaching and on custom, without any warrant of Scripture—just what Emser in great heat of argument wants to press me to say? What else do I contend for but to bring every one to an understanding of the difference between the divine Scripture and human teaching or custom, so that a Christian may not take the one for the other and exchange gold for straw, silver for stubble, wood for precious stones, as St. Paul teaches, I Corinthians ii, likewise St. Augustine in many places, and even the holy carnal law, if the distinguished Licentiate of the Canon Law had only read it with soberness. Why does the Goat call me so many names when we are in perfect agreement in the matter? Perhaps my sin is in my crude speech; I have not called the "teachings of man" a short dagger and "custom" a long spear. But it must be remembered that I am not a poetaster. Then, too, it would not have helped me even if I had hit upon this nomenclature, for he has no other reason for writing his little books than to show his masterly art of giving names to things and calling the teachings of men a short dagger and custom a long spear. In that case he would perhaps have invented other names and taught us that the teachings of men were the goat's horn and custom the goat's beard, in order to strike me down and entangle me. Such are the wise and sensible teachers which philosphy and Arstultus[2] turn out by means of the sophists.

1 Cor. 3:12

If Goat Emser all through his book raises such a hue and cry against me for the sake of his antichristian head in

[1] Emser's words: "Luther wants to fight with the scabbard and prove his cause only by the letter and the literal sense of Scripture. The cause rests not only on the Scripture or on the Gospel, but also on the established custom of Christendom, the writings of the holy fathers and the conclusions of reason." ENDERS, Luther und Emser, i, 19, 13.

[2] Aristotle. See above, p. 371, note.

Rome and thereby gains great honor, it is meet that I should turn about and raise a cry against him for the sake of my Head in heaven, Whom he blasphemes and despises. He has the effrontery to say that the Holy Spirit and Christ did not teach us enough, the Scriptures are not sufficient, God's Word must have additions, and he who has not more than God's Word, God's Scripture, and God's teaching is venomous, a heretic, an apostate, the worst man on earth, and all who live according to such words and teachings of God and do not also accept the teachings of men are damned, cursed, and should be burned at the stake. Then, indeed, Christ and the Holy Spirit must also be guilty of and have part in such condemnation, nay, they deserve it above all others, for their word and teaching have made and daily sustain such blasphemous, damned, and cursed men.

Behold the greatest blasphemer who has ever been known! Who has heard words more blasphemous, venomous, hellish, heretical, monstrous, irrational than Emser here emits toward heaven with great stench, out of his venomous and hellish throat. A miserable creature spews at God his Maker—it is so monstrous and frightful that it is shocking even to mention it. If he could show in what particular the Holy Ghost did not teach enough, and wherein the Scripture needs man-made additions, he would have some plausible excuse for his statements. But now he himself confesses that the Scripture is on our side and acknowledges freely that his man-made teaching knows no Scripture, and is unable to blame us in our use of Scripture, and yet he pours out his blasphemy on us, that is to say, on the Scripture, as he himself confesses. I should not have believed that any devil in hell would have had such effrontery. I say this only to show you, my Goat, that if a great hue and cry and a heaping together of furious words could strengthen your cause, I could strengthen my cause much better by such means. But my cause needs no such aid, it is founded too firmly on Scripture.

Your cause needs it, because it is built on men's dreams and on scrinium pectoris.[1]

This, I trust, makes it plain to every one what Emser's spear and dagger mean and what kind of bout he has had with the famous swordsman. I shall make it more interesting for him if he comes again, though I do not swear it by my priesthood or my holiness;[2] even without that he shall have all he wants. And here I conclude the consideration of his three chief points, the sword, spear, and dagger, for in defeating them his whole book, which is built on them, is overcome. But to explain my own position, since Emser admits that I have not offended against the articles of faith nor the Scriptures, and has become the unwilling and unfavorable, but therefore the stronger witness that I am a true Christian, and that he lies when he calls me a heretic, I will force him to admit another point, which he has not thought of, and which he will not easily surrender.

To wit, he shall admit our liberty in man-made ordinances and our right to choose whether to observe them or not, or, if we must live under them—which was and is still my teaching—to permit us to say that they are neither useful nor needful and we are not bound to obey them. Furthermore, that the pope is a tyrant who has no right to enjoin them and is wrong when he does, but that we shall observe them, not because of the pope's right to enforce them nor on account of the obedience we owe him, but of our own free will and in service to him, even as Christ says, Matthew iv: "Agree with thine adversary." And finally that they shall not be branded as heretics who do not observe them. All this they must grant us, as we shall presently prove.

Matt. 5:25

If, as Emser admits, we have the Scriptures and the Scriptures have us, that is doubtless all that God wants and is the best proof that we are good Christians, and our defamers only show thereby that they are liars. What more can you men demand of us? Whom do you brand as

[1] The chamber of the heart [namely, of the pope]. See Vol. II, 148, note.
[2] See above, p. 310.

heretics when you call us heretics, who according to your own acknowledgment are at one with the Scriptures? Can you condemn those whom God justifies? Does not the truth out of your own mouth condemn you, as by the mouth of a Caiphas and a Balaam? You are placed in office for no other purpose than to lead us to God and God's Word, and to feed us with God's Word, as Christ says, Matthew iv: "Man liveth by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Why do you presume to drive us farther than that, nay, to wrest us from God to yourselves and to lead us from His Word to your own teachings and customs? Is that the work of the shepherd or of the wolf?[1]

Matt. 4:4

Liberty of Conscience

Therefore I say, give us our liberty, Emser, even as your better knowledge urges you, and yield this point: that the pope is a tyrant and has no right to make laws for us, that these laws are neither useful nor needful, that the pope and all you papists are conscious that your laws make you thieves, robbers, wolves, seducers, betrayers like Judas; then we shall gladly bear and keep these laws with all our hearts, as Christ bore His cords and His cross, to which He was brought by Judas, the pope's ancestor. In this wise they will do us no harm and we shall suffer them, as we should suffer it if any one took from us our cloak, coat, money, property, and life. And if we thus should suffer you to burden our Christian liberty with your crazy, foolish, useless laws, nevertheless conscience would still be free and not oppressed by you. But if you want to claim the right to force them on us, as you do, and expect us to grant you this right and to approve it, just as though a murderer forced me to say he had the right to take my life and property, then, Emser, we shall cry out as long as there is breath in us and say "nay." For with these things you want to

[1] Emser's words: "Help me, Thou true and living Son of God, holy Lord Jesus Christ, against this ravening wolf who would lead astray thy sheep, which Thou hast purchased and redeemed with Thy rose-colored blood." Luther und Emser, i, 15.

capture our consciences so that we shall be filled with fear, as though it were right, and yet is so unrighteous; with your innumerable cords you would catch and throttle us, as you do with your unrighteous ban, when you force the people to obey your villainous commands.

We are willing to suffer wrong at your hands, but we can never call it right. Therefore tell your idol, the pope, that he may make laws for me, as many as he pleases, and I will keep them all. Tell him also, however, that he has no right to do so and that I am not bound to obey, but will gladly suffer injustice at his hands, according to Christ's teaching. Then I will do nothing more against the pope and the whole affair will be settled. What more can you ask of me? Was this not my teaching in the Commentary on Galatians[1] and in all my books? But by forcing his laws on all the world, as one who has the right to do so, the pope has ensnared innumerable souls and led them into hell. He is called the man of sin and son of perdition because he has taken the consciences captive and forced them to approve of his injustice and thus filled the world with sin and perdition. For he who believes that the pope has the right and power to make such laws, at once believes that the keeping of them is necessary and salutary and not a suffering of violence and injustice. Thereupon he keeps them unwillingly and would gladly rid himself of them and cannot, and then he perishes in his sins. For he who does unwillingly what he must, or thinks he must, sins in his heart. And all these laws of the pope, of which there are so many, are snares for the souls, by which he accomplishes naught but the spread of sin and destruction in all the world and the ruin of Christendom, even as Daniel has prophesied and on account of which Christ calls him the abomination. Forsooth, few, if any, escape him, unless they die in the cradle.

Matt 5:39 ff.

2 Thess. 2:3

Dan. 8:24 f; 9:27 Matt. 24:15

Do you understand me now, Emser? I do not desire to be free from man-made ordinances and teachings. I desire

[1] Weimar Ed., Vol.

simply to have the conscience free and to cause all Christians to invoke the sign of the cross continually against a faith that believes the pope is right in his government, for such a faith destroys faith in Chirst and floods the world with sin and destruction. From this we must conclude what pious and honorable folk the pope and all you papists are, who do nothing but teach this very superstition, seduce the world, destroy Christians' faith and lead all the souls to the devil, while you ought to be preaching only faith in Christ and liberty from man-made laws, and truly be ministers of the spirit and not of the letter.

To illustrate: I do not desire to escape from Emser's calumny, hatred and envy, but I desire to be free in my conscience to believe that Emser is unjust and arbitrary toward me. For if I should hold that he is right and if I should approve it, my conscience would be bound and could not be freed until Emser ceased to hate me. Most likely that would never be, and since I had to approve it and I did not give my approval willingly—which I could not do—I should sin unceasingly against my conscience. In such manner the whole world now sins and is perishing, since it believes that the pope is right in his commanding and coercing and tyrannizing, though nobody obeys him willingly, for every one hates the papacy, except those that want to derive advantage from it. It is properly called the abomination. Thus the pope has ensnared all the world in superstition and a false conscience, and men must, against their will, sin without ceasing, and perish. Woe unto thee, thou abominable abomination! Come, Lord Jesus Christ, and deliver us from antichrist; cast his throne into the abyss of hell, as he has deserved, so that sin and destruction may cease. Amen.

The Papists' Blundering

Let this suffice for the present. Now let us look at the lies and the blundering of Emser and all the papists even

in their use of the teaching of the fathers and the customs, on which they build so much.

Emser and all the papists say St. Peter was bishop of Rome for twenty-five years. This crass, palpable lie has been maintained for more than a thousand years, so that it should justly have grown into a long spear by this time, if "custom" were sufficient to establish the truth, as Emser dreams. Even St. Jerome[1] was caught by this error, so early did the papists bestir themselves with their lies; and they have bequeathed and increased them from generation to generation, until the papacy has become nothing but a tissue of lies. But this lie about Peter's twenty-five years' residence in Rome we shall expose so thoroughly that even Emser must see it.

Luke 3:1 St. Luke writes in chapter iii that John the Baptist began to preach in the fifteenth year of Cæsar Tiberius, and although nobody in reality knows the duration of Christ's ministry, we shall not question the current tradition that he taught for three years and a half, namely, until the nineteenth or twentieth year of Tiberius' reign, and in that same year was crucified, rose from the dead, and gave the Holy Spirit to the apostles. Now Tiberius reigned altogether twenty-four years, after him Caius four years, Claudius fourteen years, and Nero also fourteen years. Thus there are fully thirty-six years from the twentieth year of Tiberius until the last year of Nero, in which they say St. Peter was killed by Nero.

If then, as they say, St. Peter lived twenty-five years at Rome, beginning in the fourth year of Claudius, he was but eleven years in Jerusalem and Antioch after the ascension of Christ. Again they say that he lived seven years at Antioch, which leaves him in Jerusalem only six years. St. Paul here joins the ranks of the liars without timidity,

Gal. 1:18 for he writes in Galatians i that he saw Peter for the first time in Jerusalem more than three years after his conversion, which could not have been earlier than the fourth year

[1] A. D. 346–420.

after our Lord's ascension. Again he writes that more than fourteen years later he found Peter, James and John at Jerusalem. This makes eighteen years therefore which St. Paul alone assigns to Peter at Jerusalem; who knows how long he may have remained thereafter? Gal. 2:1

To these eighteen or possibly twenty years add the seven years at Antioch and the twenty-five years at Rome, and the result is that St. Peter is crucified in the forty-sixth or forty-seventh year after Christ's ascension by the emperor Nero, who died ten years before, in the thirty-sixth year. I trow that is shooting at random. But it must be thus with those who build on tradition and custom and never look into Scripture, and take without discrimination everything the fathers wrote. What will you do now, Emser? If one only had a good dagger and spear at hand to light up this dense fog of Scripture, so as to make six years out of the eighteen which St. Paul assigns to Peter at Jerusalem, and enable the seven years at Antioch and the twenty-five at Rome to fit. Truly, here Scripture is a dense fog.

They say, in addition, that St. Peter came to Rome in the fourth year or, according to others, in the second year of Claudius, and thus assign to Peter twenty-seven years in Rome and three in Jerusalem. But here too St. Luke in Acts xviii agrees with Paul in Galatians i, when he says that Claudius had driven all Jews out of Rome, among whom he mentions Aquila and Priscilla; how then could St. Peter have come to Rome under Claudius? In short, I have never read a less dependable and more uncertain history than the account of Peter's doings at Rome, and there are, indeed, many who say openly that St. Peter never saw Rome. This is what results from the lies and inconsistent writings of your papists. One writes that St. Peter suffered martyrdom on the same day with St. Paul, another makes it two years later; everything that has been written about it is uncertain. Acts 18:2 Gal. 1:18

Though I believe that St. Peter was in Rome, yet I

would not like to stake my life upon it as an article of faith. I could not argue about it or prove it; in my opinion nobody can prove it. It is not an article of faith and no one is a heretic even if he does not believe that St. Peter ever was bishop of Rome. But, on the other hand, it is presumptuous to deny it before it has been thoroughly disproved. The best way is to regard it as a supposition which is in doubt. For we are not required to believe except what God has commanded us in the Scriptures to believe, which no one may add to or take away from, as Moses taught and St. Paul says in Galatians iv: "Even a man's testament no man changeth or addeth thereto"; how much less should any one change or add to God's testament.

Deut. 12:32
Gal. 3:10

I am of the opinion, however, that a special providence of God caused St. Paul's journey to Rome and not Peter's to be recorded in Scripture, because He foresaw how the papists would build their papacy on the latter. Therefore He set them in the sand and mud before they began to build and left them no foundation at all. For if it cannot be clearly proved from Scripture that St. Peter was bishop at Rome, which is not possible, the whole structure of the papacy lies in the mire and is nothing at all. And as it is not necessary to believe that St. Peter was bishop of Rome, since Scripture does not mention it, so it is likewise not necessary to believe that the pope is his successor and really pope. Behold the foundation of the papal chair; and their claims only make us uncover all the more its fallacy and worthlessness, that we may see the riders unhorse themselves by their own violence. Therefore I conclude on this point that it is not necessary to hold the pope to be pope or the heir of St. Peter until they prove by Scripture that St. Peter was bishop of Rome. Hey, my papists, be up and doing, find spears, daggers, and swords and drive away this fog of Scripture.

I imagine that the error of St. Peter's twenty-five years in Rome arose when someone perhaps said or wrote that

St. Peter came to Rome only after the twenty-fifth year, and some understood that to mean he had been in Rome for twenty-five years. For if he was in Jerusalem eighteen years, as St. Paul says in Galatians i, and seven years in Antioch, as they say, it would make a full twenty-five years and he could then have been in Rome eleven years and have been crucified by Nero in the latter's last year, namely, the thirty-sixth year after the ascension of the Lord. A similar error may have been made in the statement that he came to Rome in the third or fourth year of Claudius, it being rather the third or fourth year of Nero, allowing him eleven years under Nero until Nero's fourteenth and last year. It could not have been otherwise, if indeed he came to Rome at all, which question I shall leave just where it is.

The Marriage of Priests

I gave the advice[1] that a good priest who, being weak, was burdened with woman and child, and desired to marry the woman, should boldly muster up courage and do so. Now this chaste Goat raises a hue and cry and says, Let the furious devil follow him rather than I, and praises to the skies his own extreme but unproved chastity. To your own nose your goatdom is pure balsam. I answer: O holy, holy virgin St. Emser, how hath thy chastity become like iron, so unfeeling and merciless against poor sinners. I did not advise your own precious chastity to follow me, as you twist my words to mean, thereby to poison the people against me after the usual manner of your Christian love and divine priesthood. My advice was meant for the poor priest, with children on his hands, but in all other respects leading a good and honest life, all of which, your holiness well knows, does not in the least apply to you. I neither gave anything to, nor took away anything from the canons, the vicars, the wicked

[1] Vol. I, 121 f.

priests who keep harlots, and the Emsers. But you thought and firmly resolved: Ha, this monk must be treated with lies and abuse, even if I must go out of my way to find an excuse. And then you rage against me only with man-made laws, just as if you had succeeded in making me accept the teachings of men as valid and there were no need to prove them first with Scripture.

Your lily-white chastity should not trouble itself to tell me what your man-made laws provide in this matter; I knew it well and have fought against it and needed not the instruction of any Goat or ass. But you should
1 Tim. 4:3 answer St. Paul when in I Timothy iv he speaks not as man but expressly as God and says outright: Forbidding to marry is a doctrine of the devil. Here a fire-eater[1] ought to show his teeth and bite a hole in my armor, but you flee from this passage as if your horns were afire, you have not a word to say, and vanish like a soap-bubble. Strike me just once with a sword like that, I will await the thrust without parrying. How often must I cry at you thick, stupid papists to come with the Scripture. Scripture, Scripture, Scripture, can you not hear it, you deaf Goat and stupid ass? Up, my Goat, in your wrath and butt me, but take not too long a run for it lest you spend yourself before striking. Are you not ashamed, you great teachers of the world, that I must continually pound and press you for Scripture, with which you ought to challenge me at the very start. For you cannot deny that no other teacher has appeared upon earth except the pope, who forbade marriage, meat, eggs, milk, butter and the like and then sold again the right to these things, and did this the world over. There have been heretics who have rejected marriage, but they were few and their teaching never became universal law. And you cannot reprove or refuse St. Paul when he clearly states that such laws of the pope are the devil's laws; in this matter

[1] Eisenfresser, literally an iron-eater, i. e., a man who performs wonderful feats with his mouth.

you must let the pope be the apostle of the devil, and Antichrist. In spite of yourself you cannot prevent it.

Now tell me, is it just that Christians, especially priests, should obey the devil and his apostle, the pope? And if the priesthood rendered such obedience hitherto, driven by force or misled by deception, does it not have the authority to give the devil and his apostle a ticket of leave? Or must it knowingly remain under the devil's laws, without necessity, or desire, or willingness? Where are you, Emser? Do you not hear? Are you asleep with Baal? 1 Kings 18:27 Or are you on a journey? The question here is not whether your chastity wants to follow me or not, I ask not whether the devil follows me in your stead. No one cares what you and all the devils do or want to do. Want, taunt, follow, fume to your heart's content. But here is where the hare lies, look at it with both eyes if that is possible for you, and see whether this prohibition of marriage is right or wrong. If you want to let out your fury, overthrow the apostle Paul in this matter.

And that I may be understood by one so highly learned in grammar, logic, philosophy and law, I say, do not make a propositio de inesse[1] to be modalem de necesse,[2] my strict logician; nor jus ex facto,[3] my superlearned licentiate of the holy cremated law; nor out of your own facere[4] a universal debere,[5] my verdant poet and grammarian. Perhaps you would like to run to your archfool[6] and seek secundum quid

[1] A common logical term in the Middle Ages. It was used generally to distinguish the accident and the particular from the substance and the universal. In other words, a propositio de inesse would be a judgment which dealt with the accidental or particular. Prantl, Geschichte der Logik, i, 685; ii, 189.

[2] This term was one largely debated by the logicians of the Middle Ages. There are six modal determinations, of which the mode of necessity is one. In the teaching on the modality of judgments the adverbs are considered as adjectives of the verbs. The mode of necessity therefore would be a proposition in which necessity would be stressed in the adverbial determination. Prantl, Geschichte der Logik, iii, 14, 44.

[3] Turn a fact into a law.

[4] doing.

[5] obligation.

[6] Aristotle.

simpliciter,[1] as you do with the priesthood, where you call sacerdotium simpliciter the scriptural, literal, external, deadly priesthood, yea, the priesthood that is nothing at all, and secundum quid, the one, spiritual, true, living priesthood. So well do you know what secundum quid et simpliciter means; your logic is as good as your theology. If I did not know logic and philosophy myself, you big, stupid asses might undertake to pose as logicians and philosophers, though you know as much about it as an ass about music.[2] You may have learned to repeat the terms like the nuns their psalter and the parrot his words, but you know neither their proper use nor their application, sicut rusticus opibus suis arguitur, non ornatur.[3]

But I will give you a little advice in this case. Take your short dagger with which you slay the cuirassiers and say: This passage is a dense fog, we cannot understand it without the explanation of the fathers, and convince us by your superior intellect that we do not know what is meant by prohibere,[4] nubere,[5] doctrinae,[6] daemones,[7] abstinere,[8] cibi,[9] Deus,[10] creare,[11] and explain them, so that prohibere[4] means to command, nubere[5] to remain single, daemones[7] the Church, Deus[10] the pope, and creare[11] to obey, just as you have taken liberties everywhere else to change and subvert things according to your pleasure. You have a good example of teaching by this method in St. Aristotle himself, who also calls non ens what others call ens, and ens what others call non ens, and has invented,

---

[1] Secundum quid et simpliciter. This is the logical fallacy now known as converse accident. Its full Latin form is, a dicto secundum quid, ad dictum simpliciter. "This is the fallacy of reasoning from that which may be true under certain conditions or limitations—to that which, however, is not true when these conditions or limitations are removed." HIBBEN, Logic, Deductive and Inductive, 161.

[2] See Vol. I, 363.

[3] Just as the rustic betrays himself by his display, but is not honored thereby.

[4] prohibit [5] marry [6] doctrines [7] devils [8] abstain [9] food [10] God [11] create.

in addition, actum et potentiam, per se and per accidens, just as you have invented spear and dagger, scabbard and blade. Your canon law is also on your side, for it makes sin where there is none and makes that a law which is not a law, as we see in the matter of the ceremonies. It is therefore quite fitting for you to use that kind of philosophy and the canon law to explain the obscure Scripture.

Since, then, the pope is found to be clearly the devil's apostle in this prohibition of marriage, I beg your humble chastity to observe what must follow. First, all priests are bound, by their soul's salvation, herein to flee the pope, curse him, oppose him as the very devil himself, and to break the forced vow made in ordination, as a vow made to the devil and not unto God, in accordance with your holy law, which declares: "In malis promissis non expedit servare fidem."[1] This is not my counsel, but St. Paul himself is most vigorous here and condemns all these things when he says such teaching is the teaching of the devil and not of God. 1 Tim. 4:1 ff.

Furthermore it must follow, that all bishops and priests who obey this command of the pope are likewise the messengers and helpers of the devil. Thus it is clearly proved that the papacy and its whole priesthood is the kingdom of the devil and the rule of antichrist, and Emser is the champion of the devil and of antichrist. For to accept and champion the devil's teaching cannot easily be glossed over. Who will oppose me here? Seek out the swordsman now and smite with the blade, you wretched Emser.

But when you say that St. Paul's words are directed against the errors of Faustus and Jovinian, who were refuted by Jerome and Augustine,[2] you make me think

[1] Wicked vows must not be kept. Canon Law, c. 2, C. xxii.

[2] Emser: "This saying of St. Paul does not belong here where Luther has dragged it in by the hair, but it concerns the heretics Jovinian, Faustus and others, who condemned marriage altogether, and whose heresy was sufficiently exposed and refuted by Augustine and Jerome." ENDERS, L. und E., i, 80 f.

you were taking part in the carnival masquerade at the time. St. Jerome chides Jovinian because he praised marriage, and you say he prohibited marriage; so careful are you in your reading of history and of Jerome.[1] Again, Faustus was a Manichean whom Augustine did not oppose on the score of marriage at all.[2] You addleheaded ass, why do you not inform yourself better, if you want to write about such matters? There were some who were called Tatians,[3] but their error cannot be compared with the prohibition of marriage by the pope. And even if it could, it is quite enough for me that the pope is in this matter a heretic like unto them, and makes of himself a catch-basin for every heresy, like the pantheon of the Romans in ancient times. But of that some other time.

You are also very clever in rejecting the letter of St. Ulrich,[4] although I do not lay stress on it at all. I want to checkmate you with the Scriptures, not with any teachings of men. But if that letter had helped your side, it would not have been disputed, since Scotus,[5] Gerson,[6] Beda[7] and

---

[1] Jovinian, formerly a monk but later called the Epicurus of the Christians, was condemned as a heretic by synods in Rome and Milan about 390. He maintained that a virgin is no better as such than a wife in the sight of God. Jerome's answer was so vigorous on the other side of the question that some of his friends wanted to suppress his answer. See SMITH and WACE, Dict., iii, 465 f.

[2] Faustus, erstwhile instructor of Augustine, condemned to exile in 386. Augustine wrote a treatise against him many years later. Ibid., ii, 472.

[3] Tatian, a Christian apologist of the second century, was accused by Irenæus and others of having taught that marriage was fornication. SMITH and WACE, iv, 803. See also Luther's own references to the Tatians in other places, e. g., Erl. Ed., xxviii, 327; xxxiii, 122.

[4] A letter was ascribed to bishop Ulrich of Augsburg, who died in 973 and was canonized in 993, which took a decided stand against the prohibition of marriage to the clergy by the pope. (See Realencyk., xx, 213; Weimar Ed., vii, 677.) Emser's "clever rejection" reads: "I do not believe that St. Ulrich wrote the letter which was recently published in his name and which, they say, was discovered in Holland, for these reasons: First, because of his holy and chaste life; secondly, because the style and composition is rather that of our day than of the time of St. Ulrich; thirdly, because it would doubtless have been discovered long ago in his chapter-house at Augsburg, rather than in Holland," etc. ENDERS, L. u. E., i, 85 f.

[5] See p. 338.

[6] See Vol. I, 95.

[7] The venerable Bede, who lived from 674 to 735, one of the most eminent of English church fathers.

whomsoever you wish to quote, must not be disputed. This is your flawless logic: St. Ulrich's letter is not discovered at Augsburg, hence it is not St. Ulrich's. Quintilian's book is not discovered in Rome or in Italy, hence it is not Quintilian's. Emser's book is not discovered at Dresden, is it therefore not Emser's? Did malvasier or rastrum[1] teach you logic? And who informed you that St. Ulrich's letter was not discovered at Augsburg, unless it was your logic, which ex individua infert universalem?

I truly believe that when you wrote your book you had no thought but that the whole world is composed of Jerome Emsers and Jerome Walthers[2] and other blockheads of your sort, you lumber along so clumsily without the least reflection and circumspection; as, for instance, when you write that it is necessary in our day to burn the heretics, when printing so easily increases books and errors, which was not the case in olden times. You do not have brains enough in your thick skull to remember that John Hus and Jerome[3] were burned at Constance[4] before printing was invented.[5] It is of the same stripe when you compare me with an apothecary who writes pleasant names on the boxes which contain poison; thus, you say, I write the name of Jesus on my poisonous books. Yet it is not myself but the printers; they print it throughout the book, I write it only on the first page. Where have you ever seen such apothecaries? or must even the apothecaries on my account become murderers and deceivers for you? In the fury of your hatred you cannot even express yourself correctly. Ecclesiasticus[6] said: "The heart of fools is

[1] The former a very good wine, the latter a very poor beer. See Vol. I, 362 and 387.
[2] Jerome Walther of Nuremberg, later the burgomaster of Leipzig. He placed a monument at Emser's grave in Dresden. See Realencyk.
[3] Of Prague.
[4] In 1415.
[5] In 1454.
[6] Ch. 21, verse 26, of the apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus, which the Roman Catholic Church still regards a part of the O. T. Luther's Bible places it with the other apocrypha between the O. and N. T., "as useful and good to read."

in their mouth, but the mouth of the wise is in their heart," doubtless because fools speak out whatever comes to their minds, but wise men think before they speak. How could you write anything of value, when in your blundering, thoughtless fashion you spit out whatever comes to your tongue; you always smite your own cheek.

Therefore my advice is still what it was, intended not for the chaste Emsers and wondrously holy Goats, but for the pitiable flock of fallen priests: If a man cannot restrain himself, let him marry and live without sin; if he cannot live without distress, let him disregard the pope with his devil and devil's teaching, and be untroubled by the unwilling, forced promise made to the bishop in the devil's stead—it was not made willingly and with a whole heart. And if the pope had brought about no other calamity than this prohibition of marriage, it would be sufficient to stamp him as antichrist, who is rightly called the man of sin and son of perdition, and the abomination, so much sin and perdition have followed in the wake of this one law. If you, Goat, would only pull your own nose, you would be forced to admit that it has not brought much holiness to you. If you are chaste, be thankful to God and take care so to continue, you are not yet over the mountain, and despise not your poor, fallen neighbors. A mighty giant like you ought not eat up all tainted, sick little children.

2 Thess. 2:3
Dan. 9:27

One thing more and I have done. You and Murner and many others reproach me severely for exposing only the vices of the clergy and keeping silent about the reprehensible vices of the nobility and the temporal princes. If you see so marked a weakness in me, why do you not make good my omission? Why must you call upon me and urge me to something which you are not willing to do yourselves? Yea, why do you not censure the vices of the clergy? Can I accomplish everything in one book? But even if I had done what you ask, you would nevertheless have found fault and said, I had not stuck to my text,

for I had essayed to call upon the nobility for help and then had rebuked them instead, just as you say that I taught that the number of mendicant orders ought to be reduced, and for that you call me an unclean bird, fouling my own nest.

What could I write that your furious hatred would not revile, when you revile God's Word and work, and your one ambition is to revile and lie. But I will give you an answer. In my opinion I have reproached the nobility and men of the world more than I have you of the clergy, namely, in the books on good works,[1] on the ten commandments,[2] and to the German nobility,[3] and did not once attack the vices of the clergy, such as their unchastity, avarice, hatred, gluttony, pride, indolence, except in this one book to the German nobility, wherein I exposed the avarice, not of the clergy in general, but of the pope and the Roman court and showed but a small portion of its abominable practices. My dear comrades, the truth hurts you, therefore you seek for a cause against me; the sheep has defiled the water for the wolf.

I say further to you that I have not yet come to the point of attacking the public vices, either of the spiritual or of the temporal estate. My work is centered upon the vices which you papists exalt as virtues and by which you have filled the world with hypocrisy and superstition, such as the indulgences, masses, vigils, churches, vestments, in short, all your man-made ordinances which you regard as most sacred. I wrestle with these, for the sake of pure faith, to pull the masks from your faces. I have still much to do before I can give attention to general morality and good works. If only we had true faith again, set free from your devilish laws and sects, we could readily censure vice and teach proper conduct, and if the spiritual estate led all others in purity of faith and faithfulness to God's Word,

---

[1] A Treatise on Good Works, Vol. I, 184 ff.
[2] Weimar Ed., i, 398 ff.
[3] An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility, Vol. II, 61 ff.

we should easily lead the nobility and the temporal estate in the way they should go. But since we are so unprofitable ourselves, how much would it profit to censure and rebuke them? Evil conduct and work is of little moment compared with the false teaching and superstition in which the spiritual estate is steeped. Therefore I did not address the nobility in a learned book, but simply showed them the evil practices for which they could readily find a remedy. But the obligation is upon us of the spiritual estate, as over against the teachings of men and superstition, to teach faith and the Word of God, which are as high above works as the heavens are high above the earth, as we read in
Isa. 55:9 Isaiah lv. You of the spiritual estate are accustomed to receive only praise, honor and money for your work, and if one ventures just a little criticism, you act as if the heavens were falling on you. In all our books you want nothing but rebuke, without mercy, for the common people; but you we must ever call Gracious Sirs, suffer you to do anything and always put the best construction on it. This is what you call honoring the priesthood, and if this is not done, you call it bringing shame on the priesthood.

Here I will rest the case with Emser for this time. And what I have said is sufficient answer to his word-jugglery with masses, brotherhoods, the canonizing of saints, vows and other things, for his book supports my cause in four points:

First, he flees the Scripture as the devil flees the holy cross. His only thought is, to draw me away from Scripture, which, please God, he never will and never can accomplish.

Second, he lies in such unchristian, impudent, wanton manner and burdens me with so many errors of his own invention, as to give him material enough to keep on writing eternally, by which I understand that it was not his intention to refute my teaching, but to give full play to his enjoyment of lying and reviling.

Third, he acknowledges openly that I do not offend

against the articles of faith or the Scripture, for which I most courteously thank him; for I desired naught else from my best friends, even from God Himself, than the praise and commendation, which this my worst, deadly enemy gives me.

Fourth, he acknowledges that his cause rests not on Scripture but on teachings of men and on custom, and desires to drag me into them. Now in all my writings I have sought no more, even now I seek no more, from the pope and all my enemies, than just such confession that their cause is acknowledged to be without foundation in Scripture. This makes it easy to perceive how wise a man Goat Emser is, who in writing against me acknowledges and gives this praise to everything which he opposes, that it is founded in Scripture, that is to say, in God's Word. Yet for the sake of God he raves and rages against God's Word; he is not merely in need of sneezewort, but should rather be led in chains to St. Cyriacus.[1]

Of course, if he comes again, I can still pay him what has now been left unpaid. Let this be enough at this time, lest I swamp the reader.

Reply To Murner

I reply to you, my dear Murner, so that you may not think that I despise your good intentions, for I want to place faith in you, this first time, notwithstanding the way others have pictured you to me. And although you have a good stock of stinging and malicious words, your courteous admonition[2] gave me pleasure. There is not enough of

[1] Sneezewort (hellebore, veratrum), a herb whose "black roots are a powerful cathartic, but violently narcotic and acrid" (Standard Dict.), was thought to produce a clearing of the brain and thus to be an antidote to lunacy. Luther thinks Emser's case too far gone for this remedy, however, and advocates the help of the saint, one of the fourteen defenders against evil, whose special occupation was the curing of lunatics. See Weimar Ed., vii, 680, note.

[2] Murner's first treatise against Luther was entitled: "A Christian and brotherly admonition addressed to the highly learned Doctor Martin Luther of the Augustinian order at Wittenberg, to recant some statements about the New Testment of the holy mass and again unite with common Christendom." Enders, L. u. E., ii, vii.

me, however, to answer each one of you separately; but since you are Emser's comrade in this, that you base your argument upon the teaching of men and on custom and do not oppose me with Scripture, my answer to Emser must be my answer to you also, though I do not discover lies in you as I do in Emser.[1] You two are remarkable warriors. You will not come out unto me in the open, waste your ammunition in aimless shooting, and are afraid of your skins when it comes to Scripture. I bring Scripture against your teachings of men and custom, and then you reply as if I had conceded the point that the teaching of men and custom were right, and you argue with me only about the consequences of departing from them, and in that way want to wrest me away from Scripture. God help me, can I never bring you into the Scripture?

You essay to teach me with great show of learning nothing but what the dullest peasant or child, or even a born fool could teach me. No fool is so unreasonable, no devil so wicked, but knows and acknowledges that one ought to do what is right. Listen to me, you pitiable, superficial papists, while I state a syllogism[2] which will make the case very clear. This major premise I concede: Everything that is good must be kept. There is no need to argue with me about that, you ought to know better. But you should meet me when I attack you on this minor premise: All the teaching of men and the custom, which I attack, is good. Here, my comrades, I take issue, this citadel I will assault, here you must be on the alert and defend yourselves. If you can save yourselves and conquer me here, you need not worry about the conclusion, I will accept it with all my heart and say: Therefore the teaching of men and the custom which I attack must be kept. And since you do not defend the minor premise, but simply argue the major premise and then put down the

[1] See p. 342 ff.

[2] The regular logical form of argument, consisting of three propositions, of which the first two are called the premises and the last the conclusion.

conclusion, you are like the builders of Babel, where when one called for a stone, the water was brought. I strike you on the head and you bandage your feet. I set fire to the roof and you play the stream on the cellar. What, would you turn this serious engagement into a farce? You ask me to drink and I knock at the tankard, that you may fill it—dear brethren, you may drink out of empty tankards and pay out money from empty purses, I have not yet learned the art. Gen. 11:7

You threaten, too, to reply with many books and you challenge me with the great storehouse of your learning, in order to frighten me and to place the victory in the number and length of treatises, so that if you cannot win with arguments, you may wear me out with their bulk and number,[1] since I am heavily burdened as it is and a hero of leisure like you has nothing to do but to add to the pressure upon a hardworked and much troubled man. Why do you not take on an idle comrade like yourself, who has nothing to do, or an evil-tongued woman, who, like you, would fain have the last word? My dear Murner, do you take me for a fool, that I should dispute with you or with anybody else, just to see who can talk the most or who can manage to say the last word? It was not necessary for you to earn the honor, for it is quite evident how the scales would tip, if your weight were judged by your tongue. It were easier for the Rhine to run dry than that the flow of your words should cease. But is it true Christian teaching of the people and showing real leadership for you simply to boast of many words and to plan to gain the advantage, marching about on the field but never coming to a battle, wasting the people's time and letting them gape in vain?

Have you not read "where there are many words, there is frequently a void"? I am of the opinion that if you had to deal with Scripture, you would quickly tire of your Prov. 14:23

[1] Murner had written three books against Luther in one year. See Introduction, p. 280.

triplication[1] and find one sheet of paper more than ample for your needs. You have never made the attempt, therefore you do not know the great amount of research and labor required to bring proof from Scripture, my dear Murner. You never quote Scripture at all, but merely write what fancy dictates, leave my Scripture unanswered, and then promise, I do not know how much more of your cleverness for the future, as if I had nothing else to do than to deal with you alone in one book after another, and if I did not do that, to concede the victory to you.

You have my books and the Scripture they quote; examine them and also bring Scripture. Let Thomas Murner, the garrulous word-hero, stay at home, refute my Scripture with better Scripture and cite the authority for your teaching. Come out and show yourself; why waste time in challenging and defying? Charge right at me and strike so that you may hit; I will stand my ground. You need not hide your ability, and if it is the right kind it will not shun the light. Otherwise your constant writing will appear like a seeking of renown and applause rather than, as you claim, a faithful and true seeking of my welfare. If you can convince me through Scripture, doubt it not, I will submit. You know very well how all the fathers ofttimes erred; therefore it is not certain how much custom and long usage count with God, to Whom we are responsible for the keeping of His Word and not of the teachings of men or custom. For this reason I want Scripture. Scripture, Murner; Murner, Scripture! Or else seek another combatant; I have other things to do than to attend to your scriptureless chatter.

Nor do I want your own deductions; they are too insipid and worthless. I will prove that to you in the one instance where you thought yourself most brilliant. When I called the Christian Church a spiritual assembly,[2] you mocked me, as if I would build a church like Plato's city,

[1] See note, p. 393.
[2] In The Papacy at Rome, Vol. I, 349 ff.

which could be found nowhere, and the sally took your fancy, so that you thought you had struck home. So you say, would it not be a fine city, where there were spiritual walls, spiritual towers, spiritual guns, spiritual horses, and everything spiritual! And your final word is, that the Christian Church cannot exist without locality, occupying space and having temporalities. My answer, dear Murner, is: Should I for the sake of your deductions deny Scripture and place you above God? Why do you not answer my texts, such as, "There is no respect of persons with God"; Rom. 2:11
and, "The kingdom of God is within you"; also, "The Luke 17:20 f.
kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither John 3:6
shall they say, Lo, here! or lo, there!" And what Christ says in John i, "What is born of the spirit, is spirit." I dare say that you would call the Christian Church, or us, in whom God lives and reigns, the kingdom of God. How can I follow your reason and deny Christ, Who clearly says here that there is no locality, place or anything external in the kingdom of God; it is not here or there, but a spirit within us. But you say, it is here and there.

What say you to St. Stephen in Acts viii: "The most Acts 7:48
High dwelleth not in buildings made with hands"? My friend, let your reasoning come into play here, make an "also" out of the "not" and say: God's dwelling is also in buildings made with hands. And Isaiah, whom Stephen quotes, says: "Where is the place of my rest? Where is the house that ye build unto me?" My dear Isaiah, do you not know? Murner will tell you: It is at Rome or wherever pope and Christians are. "Nay," says Isaiah, Isa. 66:2
"but my spirit dwells in a poor and contrite spirit, who honors my word." What think you, Murner? I think you are making a fine show with this church of yours with its material horses, places and towers. Behold, how perfectly the best thing in your book accords with Scripture. Therefore you had better put reason to bed and show me by one letter of Scripture that temporal

space, place or buildings belong to the church, and I will ask nothing more, but quickly submit.

And that you may see that nothing is so closely reasoned which cannot be contradicted by other reasoning, I say that if temporal space or place is churchy[1] because Christians cannot live on earth without occupying space, then wine, bread, yea, the stomach with all its contents would likewise be churchy. Is the spittle, mucus and excrement a part of the body or its nature, because the body cannot be without them? Your cowl is perhaps not without lice; are lice therefore monks' cowls? The Christian Church cannot be without suffering, persecution and dying, nay, not even without sin; must therefore suffering, death, persecution and sin themselves be church and life? You would build the church partly on temporalities, mix the bodily with the spiritual, unite sin and
Phil. 3:20 grace, while St. Paul says, "Our conversation is in heaven" and Christendom lives only to flee and forsake earthly place, space, substance, honor, body and all things here below, passing through them to eternal life in the same way as it passes through sin, martyrdom, suffering and death. Are you beginning to see, my Murner, what it means to theologize without Scripture, by mere unaided reason? And if you reply to this, do you think I could not reply again? But where would finally be the truth which we sought?

My conclusion is, therefore, that the Christian Church is not bound to any place, person or time, and although that ignorant multitude, the pope with his cardinals, bishops, priests and monks, do not want to understand it or admit it to be the truth, yet firmly on my side are Sir Omnes,[2] also the little children in the streets, together with the great multitude of Christians in the world, and they stand with me against the painted and pretended church of the pope and his papists. If you ask how that is possible, I answer

[1] See p. 320.
[2] Luther's oft-used expression to designate the common people.

briefly, all Christians in the world pray: I believe in the Holy Ghost, one holy Christian Church, the Communion of saints. If this article is true, it follows that no one can see or feel the holy Christian Church, and no one can say it is here, or there. For an object of faith cannot be seen or felt, as St. Paul teaches in Hebrews xi. Again, what Heb. 11:1 one can see or feel, is not an object of faith. Is this not clear enough for both Murner and Emser? Come right out, what can you say against this? Are children and peasants not more learned herein than pope, cardinals, bishops, priests and monks? Where is the gentry that presumes to explain the Scripture and make clear the faith and says so loudly that the common man understands nothing about these things? The case is different here, and the pope with his bishops and their adherents knows far less than the plain peasant and the little child.

Now compare them, the holy Church of Christ and the crazy church of the pope. The holy Church of Christ says: I believe a holy Christian Church. The crazy church of the pope says: I see a holy Christian church. The former says: The church is neither here nor there. The latter says: The church is here and there. The former says: The church depends not on a person. The latter says: The church depends on the pope. The former says: The church is not built on anything temporal. The latter says: The church is built on the pope. What think you, Murner? A noble company of Scripture interpreters! St. Peter has described you: "And through covetousness 2 Pet. 2:3 shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." Or is it not true that the pope seeks none other with his papacy than the money and wealth of the world and concerns himself not at all with the Gospel and faith? None the less he and you keep up the fiction, pretend to explain the Scripture and teach faith, and yet there is no more unlearned people on earth than the popes, cardinals, bishops, priests and monks, so that it causes amazement if perchance one among them is found to be a scholar.

This wanton mockery has resulted in more sects, schisms and errors in the papistic church than can be found anywhere else in the world. For the papacy, in building the church on a place and person, has become the head and source of all the sects, who have followed it and localized Christian life, making it a thing of eating and drinking, of clothing and shoes, of tonsures and hair, of room and place, of day and hour. For the spirituality and sanctity of the papistic church consists in these things, as I said above.[1] This order fasts at one time, the other at some other time, this one eats no meat, the other no eggs, one wears white, the other black, this one is a Carthusian,[2] that one a Benedictine;[3] and thus innumerable sects and customs are created and meanwhile faith and true Christian life go to ruin. It is a result of that blindness by which men wanted to see the church and not believe it, and seek a pious Christian life not in faith, but in works. St. Paul writes much about this to the Colossians. But it crept in, and in like blindness the pope was confirmed in his rule.

Matt 16:18 That you print, in capital letters, the passage from Matthew xvi, "Thou art Peter" etc., and say that this is the text by which heretofore the papacy has been proved, does not frighten me, my dear Murner. Neither was there need to tell me that until now the papacy has been proved by this text. We do not now ask whether it has been proved by that text, but whether it has been rightly and truly proved by it. Here you should use your capital letters and answer me correctly, and let men see the unconquerable Murner. For I find in all the Scriptures no stronger text against the papacy than the very one which you regard the one strongest support of the papacy. Now if I succeed in taking it away from you and overturning it, so clearly that you must comprehend, I hope you will

---

[1] See p. 397.

[2] An order founded by St. Bruno in 1086. Its rules are very severe.

[3] Founded by St. Benedict (of Nursia) in the sixth century. Its rules are less rigorous than the Carthusian.

acknowledge that I have won, and concede that I have overthrown the helpless papacy before your very eyes, and have branded all of you, together with the pope, as false and lying perverters of the Scripture. Take heed to my words, therefore, no papist has yet cracked this little nut for me, and none shall ever crack it!

Christ says, Matthew xvi: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against the rock, and the church built upon the rock." That is true, is it not, Murner? Now you cannot deny that the gates of hell prevail daily over the papists, and that the papacy, with the pope, often errs and does what is wrong; can you deny this, too, Murner? For you must see that those who live the worst lives are the most loyal supporters of the pope, and certainly the gates of hell prevail against them. Consequently, the rock and the church of which Christ declares that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them, accord with the pope and his church as light with darkness and Christ with Belial. If you then want to prove the papacy by this text, I have the right to force you to show a pope and a papacy which have no sin, against whom the gates of hell have not prevailed. When will you undertake to do that, Murner? Hey, now build a material church on this and ride out in state; but take care lest you fall on this field, you will have dangerous riding here. Matt. 16:18

Since this text will not permit a sinful pope and papacy, and no man can know which pope is without sin, and most of them have sinned openly, and not a person or place can be shown against which the gates of hell have not prevailed, it is, in my opinion, clear that the holy Christian church cannot be visibly shown, but must be believed, and shall remain in spite of Murner and all the papists a spiritual city, built on the rock Christ, invisibly and in the spirit. This, I hope, will reduce the papacy to ashes, since the one great text for it is against it. For to use this text as a foundation for the building of the papacy is like a madman's building a hut of straw on a fire. Yet we want to be

blind and we juggle with words, and so we make petra[1] to mean Peter and all the sinful popes against whom the gates of hell prevail, which Christ cannot endure, or else must be made out a liar.

What help is it, for you, Murner and all papists, to quote many fathers in connection with this text? They erred as men, and you want to make their error your foundation and truth. For me the original word of Christ means more than all the teachers and fathers, however holy and learned they may have been. Christ's words are clear enough and need no commentary. But it behooves you and all the papists to be industrious, make good your word and set the papacy again on this text for me—otherwise I will not answer you in any other matter, for since I have found you to be wrong in the chief point, you cannot expect to be believed until this lie is wiped out.

This must be my answer for this time to your scriptureless twaddle. I do not despise you personally, though what other people think of your book you may see in the rhyme here following, which has been sent me from the Rhine and shows how needless it is to answer you. It surprises me that you prattlers and scribblers venture so boldly into the fray, when you know that so many intelligent and sensible judges are on guard. I myself could not have answered you as neatly as this rhymster.

A Rhyme of Dr. Murner

Doctor Murner's experience I now must recite,
How he recently spent a long, sleepless night,
To finish two books, to his own great delight,
By which he could put Doctor Luther to flight.
He misses the mark, though he labors with might,
Blindly beating the air in his sorrowful plight.
He circles the porridge, never leaving its sight,
But as to the eating, he fears to alight.

[1] The Greek word for "rock" in Matt. 16:18.

He comes at the fox as if he meant fight,
With bark so ferocious, but never a bite.
He rests his whole case upon custom and rite,
And many new laws, which he drags into sight,
And forces the Scriptures, to make it seem right.
He set out to darken a wonderful light
Which cannot be hid, e'en by blackness of night.
Therefore my belief I make bold to indite:
Martin Luther will scorn e'er an answer to write.

What, think you, shall such people think of you, Goat Emser, who come only with lies and the clumsiest tomfoolery, dreams of your own inventing? For even if Murner agrees with you, he nevertheless refrains from lies,[1] which are the best accomplishment in your books. Mend your ways, dear brethren; the Scriptures are coming to light, man's eyes are being opened, and you must deck your cause in other garments or the bright light will bring you to shame. I give you kindly warning. May God soon help us all to the real truth. Amen.

[1] Michael Stiefel, writing against Murner, said, however: "Luther did not really know you when he wrote that you did not lie as much as Emser." W. KAWERAU, Thomas Murner und die deutsche Reformation, 103. See also Weimar Ed., vii, 688.

TO THE KNIGHTS OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER

AN EXHORTATION

THAT THEY LAY ASIDE FALSE CHASTITY AND TAKE UPON THEM THE TRUE CHASTITY OF WEDLOCK

1523

INTRODUCTION

The Teutonic Order, or Teutonic Knights of St. Mary's Hospital at Jerusalem, grew out of the establishment of a field hospital during the siege of Acre in the winter of 1190–91, by pious merchants of Bremen and Lübeck. When these merchants returned to Germany in 1191 they turned over the hospital to the chaplain Conrad and the chamberlain Burkhard. With the model of the Hospitallers or Knights of St. John the Baptist, later known as Knights of Malta, before them, these men together with other Germans, formed a brotherhood, adopted the rules of the Hospitallers, and named their hospital "The Hospital of St. Mary of the Germans in Jerusalem" "in the hope and confidence that when the Holy City was reconquered they would there establish a house which should become the mother, head and mistress of the entire Order." The new Order was confirmed by popes Clement III in 1191 and Celestine in 1196; it won as a patron the emperor, Henry VI, who bestowed upon it its first possessions in the West. In 1198 it was changed into a military Order by the adoption of the rules of the Knights Templars in addition to those of the Hospitallers. Unlike both of these older Orders, the Teutonic Knights were a strictly national organization, none but Germans of noble birth being admitted to it. "Like the knights of other orders, the Teutonic Knights lived a semi-monastic life under the Augustinian rule, and in the same way they admitted priests and half-brothers (*servientes*) into their ranks. Like the other two orders, the Teutonic Order began as a charitable society, developed into a military club, and ended as something of a chartered company, exercising rights of sovereignty on the troubled confines of Christianity. Even in its last phase the Order did not forget its original purpose: it maintained several great hospitals in its new home on the south-east shore of the Baltic, in addition to an *hôtel des invalides* at Marienburg for its sick or aged brethren."[1]

Under its fourth grand master, Hermann von Salza, 1210–39, the Order grew rapidly and made the most important advance in its history. After having aided the king of Hungary against the Comans, and receiving from the king the district of Burzenland in Transylvania, which it did not long retain, the Order was invited to assist in subduing the heathen Prussians. A Cistercian monk named Christian had succeeded in establishing the Church among the Prussians, and in 1212 was made bishop of Prussia. When the heathen arose and destroyed his churches, Christian called upon the Teu-

[1] *Encycl. Britannica*, 11th ed., xxvi, 677.

tonic Knights for help and bestowed upon them Kulm, some of the frontier towns and such lands as they should conquer (1228). After driving the enemy out of Kulm and founding the cities of Kulm, Thorn and Marienwerder, the Order began the task of conquering and Christianizing Prussia. In 1235 it absorbed the Order of Dobrzin, which had been founded by bishop Christian, and in 1237 the Knights of the Sword of Livonia, founded by Albert, bishop of Riga, became a province of the Order.

Its successes in Prussia changed the character of the Teutonic Order. It lost all connection with the East, its grand master moved his seat from Acre, first to Venice in 1291, then in 1308 to Marienburg on the Vistula. The Order became a governing aristocracy, its statutes were altered to suit the new conditions. "The Order was at once supreme ecclesiastical and political authority. . . . The lay subjects of the Order consisted of two classes: on the one hand there were the conquered Prussians, in a position of serfdom, bound in time of war to serve the brethren in foreign expeditions; on the other hand there were the German immigrants, both urban and rural, along with the free Prussians, who had voluntarily submitted and remained faithful."[1]

By the middle of the fourteenth century the Teutonic Knights had become a world power. Their cities belonged to the Hanseatic League and shared in its power; Poland had been deprived of its outlet on the Baltic; the ships of the Order were a power on the sea; Marienburg with its brilliant court was not merely a school of chivalry, but for a time a literary center. Yet the downfall of the Order was close at hand. It alienated its subjects, who allied themselves with Poland; its missionary work was completed when the Lithuanians became Christians and also made common cause with Poland; the Slav reaction made the Germanizing efforts of the Knights still more unpopular. Internally the success of the Order brought with it a secularization which was disastrous. Poland regained a foothold on the Baltic. The Prussian League was formed in 1440 with the real purpose of opposing the Knights, and in 1454 offered Prussia to the Polish king. The peace of Thorn, 1466, left to the Order only East Prussia and made the knights vassals of Poland. But the German master and the Landmeister for Livonia would not serve Poland, and the Order in East Prussia adopted the policy of electing German princes as grand masters in the hope of again regaining independence, without success. The first of these German grand masters was Frederick of Saxony, 1498 to 1511. He was succeeded by Albert of Brandenburg.[2]

---

[1] Encycl. Britannica, xxvi, 677.

[2] Third son of Frederick of Hohenzollern, prince of Ansbach and Bayreuth; he must not be confused with Albert, the elector and archbishop of Mainz, the younger son of John Cicero, elector of Brandenburg, who is also known as Albert of Brandenburg, and to whom Luther addressed the letter prefixed to the Ninety-five Theses. See Vol. I, p. 25. For a time Luther hoped that Albert of Mainz, encouraged by the example of the other Albert, would also marry. See Enders, Briefwecksel, v, 186 f.

Albert became involved in a devastating war with Poland, which was provisionally ended by a four years' truce made in 1521. In September of that year Albert suggested the possibility of a revision of the statutes of the Order by Luther, probably in harmony with the plans outlined in the Open Letter to the German Nobility.[1] So far as known Luther was not consulted at that time. Albert continued to take his place with the Roman Catholic princes. But when in April, 1522, he returned to Germany he came under the influence of Lazarus Spengler and Andreas Osiander and was won for the evangelical party. During the Diet at Nuremberg, 1522–23, he protested that it was not the proper way to proceed against Luther, "if evident truth be condemned and books burned."

Pope Hadrian VI urged upon Albert a reformation of the Order. In June, 1523, Albert secretly turned to Luther for advice concerning the reformation of the Order in head and members. On November 29th the two met at Wittenberg, and Luther advised Albert "to throw aside the foolish and absurd rules of the Order, to marry, and to convert the religious state into a secular state, either a principality or a duchy." Melanchthon, who was present at the interview, gave the same advice. The grand master smiled and said nothing. But "with that evangelical protestant advice Luther laid the foundations for the development of the Prussian state, of the Prussian kingdom, and of the German empire which is inseparable from the development of the Prussian kingdom."[2]

Soon after this meeting Luther prepared the following treatise, intended, as Kawerau suggests, to be a "feeler, which should test the attitude of the knights of the Order as well as of the Prussian bishops, and prepare them for coming events."[3] The older collected editions of Luther's works date the treatise March 28, 1523. But, as Kawerau points out, it is improbable that the treatise was written before the last month of 1523, and the date may be a mistake for December 12th. The original prints are undated; the editors may have confused the festivals of the Annunciation and of the Conception of the Virgin Mary, the latter of which may have been the date attached to the manuscript.

After the evangelical principles had been gradually introduced into Prussia by the two bishops, Georg von Polentz and Erhard von Queiss, the grand master returned to Prussia and carried out Luther's suggestion. Peace was made with Poland, Prussia was converted into a duchy held as fief of the king of Poland and hereditary in the family of Albert. July 1, 1526, Albert was married to Dorothea, the daughter of the Danish king, and thus was founded the evangelical house of the Hohenzollern.

---

[1] See Vol. II, p. 115 ff.
[2] Realencyk., i, p. 312.
[3] Weimar Ed., xii, p. 230.

The progress of the Gospel in Prussia gave Luther much joy. In 1525 he wrote to the Bishop of Samland, Georg von Polentz: "Behold the wonder! In rapid course, with full sails, the Gospel hastens to Prussia, whither it was not called, and where it was not sought after, while in Upper and Lower Germany, whither it came of its own accord, it is blasphemed, repelled and put to flight with all rage and madness."[1]

The Teutonic Order in its German and Livonian branches continued to exist, and laid claim to the rights of the Order in Prussia. It was finally suppressed in 1809, and its lands passed into the hands of the secular princes within whose territories they lay. But in 1840 the Order was resuscitated in Austria, and again engaged in hospital service, in which it is presumably active during the present war. But this Teutonic Order is not the same as that which became secularized at the time of the Reformation. The Prussian branch passed into the Prussian kingdom, not into the restored Order. A Protestant branch exists in the ancient bailiwick of Utrecht, the members of which must profess the Calvinistic faith, and are dispensed from celibacy. See Catholic Encyclopedia, xiv, 542.

The subject of the monastic vows and of the marriage of monks had been discussed at great length before this treatise was written. For the development of that discussion we must refer here to the introduction to the Treatise on Monastic Vows,[2] which was excluded from this volume because of its size. But the careful student will find that Luther has not merely repeated older arguments nor restated older positions. He has gone farther, his position is more advanced. In fact, upon the advance beyond the position taken in the Formula Missae Kawerau bases an argument for the later date of our treatise. "For the writing of this treatise immediately after the Formula Missae we find an argument in the remarkable agreement between the statements in the two concerning those who want to wait for decrees of a council and desire permission to be given them (to use the two kinds in the Lord's Supper, or, in the later treatise, to marry) by such decrees. He who reads the analogous portions in the two treatises will easily recognize in the Exhortation to the Teutonic Knights the bold heightening of the thought to a paradox, and thus see in the Formula Missae the older form."[3]

The German text is found in Weimar Ed., xii, 232–244; Walch Ed., xix, 2157–76; Erlangen Ed., xxix, 16–33; St. Louis Ed., xix, 1730–45; Berlin Ed., iv, 32–47.

Literature: Introduction by Kawerau in Weimar Ed., xii, 228–31; Prot. Realencyklopädie, 3d ed., Arts., Albrecht

---

[1] In the dedicatory letter prefixed to Luther's Commentary on Deuteronomy, Erl. Ed., opera latina, xiii. 8.

[2] In Vol. IV.

[3] Weimar Ed., xii, p. 229 f.

von Preussen, I, 310–23; Deutschorden, iv, 589–95; Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., Arts., Albert, i, 497, and Teutonic Order, xxvi, 676–9. The literature is given fully in all these articles. Compare also Schaff, Church History, vi, 588–600, and Köstlin-Kawerau, Martin Luther, i, 620–623.

W. A. LAMBERT.

Lebanon, Pa.

TO THE KNIGHTS OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER:

AN EXHORTATION

THAT THEY LAY ASIDE FALSE CHASTITY AND TAKE UPON THEM THE TRUE CHASTITY OF WEDLOCK

1523

MARTIN LUTHER

GRACE and peace in Christ. Amen.

The Teutonic Order Unique

Marvel not, dear Knights of the Teutonic Order, that I have made bold to address to you a special writing, and to advise you to give up your unchaste chastity and to marry. My intentions are altogether good. Besides, many sincere and intelligent men regard it as not merely helpful, but even necessary, to look to you to do this, because your order is indeed a unique order, differing from others most of all in that it was founded for the purpose of making war against the infidels. It must therefore wield the worldly sword and be a secular order at the same time that it is to be a spiritual order and make and keep the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience like other monks. How that combination works, daily experience and reason teach us only too well.

Reasons for Marriage

Although I have in other books written quite enough about the abomination of "spiritual" chastity and have proved convincingly that such a vow is nothing at all and is not to be kept,[1] unless a man have God's special grace

[1] See the Treatise on Monastic Vows, Vol. IV, and the development of Luther's views concerning celibacy traced in the introduction to that treatise.

(which grace can, however, work not only chastity, but all things else just as well without such a vow and law); yet I have not been able to refrain from sending the members of your order a special exhortation on the subject. I have a strong opinion and a great hope that your order can set an excellent and powerful precedent for all other orders if it should be the first to take this course. It might lead to a decrease of unchastity elsewhere also and to a more rapid increase of the fruit of the Gospel.

Wealth

For, first of all, your order has the advantage of being provided with the necessities of life. Its wealth can be distributed among the knights so that they can become landholders and overseers, or enter some other sphere of usefulness. You do not suffer from that miserable poverty which keeps many a mendicant friar and other monks in the monastery in order to provide for their stomachs. A Teutonic knight living in that way could none the less be sent to war or on any service for which he might be needed, and even more easily than under present conditions. In time the order might develop into a true order of knighthood which would be free from hypocrisy and a false name in God's sight, and acceptable to the world.

Unpopularity

Secondly, scarcely anyone will doubt that the Teutonic Order would in that case be less burdensome and more acceptable to all its subjects than it is at present. For it is notorious that as things are now neither God nor the world derives much benefit from it. Besides, the kinghts are suspected and disliked because every one knows how rare chastity is, and every man must be afraid for his wife and daughter. For they who are not married cannot be trusted very far, since even they that are married must be constantly on their guard lest they fall, although among them there is more justification for hope and confidence. Among the unmarried there is neither hope nor confidence, but only constant fear.

Absence of Danger

Thirdly, we may confidently expect that the Teutonic Order would not be injured by such a procedure, and there

is no reason to fear that the knights might be attacked because of it; especially if the change grew out of a Christian understanding of the matter and had the approval and welcome of your subjects, as was suggested above. And no doubt there are also many prominent knights who would be glad for it, inasmuch as they really desire to live decent lives. Although some would make wry faces about it at first, they would outgrow that by and by, or their displeasure would at most be harmless. It is to be hoped at any rate that from now on few people will become monks and "spiritual," because the Gospel is beginning to shine, and it reveals that "spirituality"[1] in such a way that they who are now the last and will remain the last will be compelled to provide for themselves as best they can.

Although these are human considerations which have weight only with the world, and because of which nothing that is to be valid in God's sight must either be done or left undone, begun or changed, yet they must be considered because they make this matter acceptable in the eyes of the people. For we have stronger and more worthy arguments than these to prove that it is pleasing to God. With God we would soon be at one on this subject and reach a definite agreement with Him. It is the world that is fastidious and hard to please in things that concern God; therefore we must put forth such arguments in order that we may at least present a little proof to that poor devil's-whore,[2] and thereby do all we can to quiet and humor her. If she accepts that proof, good; if not, we will bid her good-day, and in spite of her do the right and leave undone the wrong. It is enough that it pleases God.

Marriage Well-pleasing to God

We will therefore set down several arguments which are valid before God, to prove that the estate of marriage is well-pleasing to Him. God says in Genesis ii, "It is not good that the man be alone; I will make him an help who shall be about him,"[3] etc. These are words of God, and

Gen. 2:18

[1] Geysterey. [2] The world.
[3] Compare A. V., margin, "as before him."

cannot be understood except by faith. For neither reason nor nature can understand that a wife is an help to her husband. Rather, every one writes and cries out about it as we see and hear,[1] and on this point all the world must regard God as a liar. And that is why the pope has also become God's teacher and made the decree in his canon law, that a wife is not an help, but a hindrance to the service of God; therefore he who would serve God must not have a wife.[2] And that is true; the god whom the pope serves cannot be served by the work of our God.

This was foretold of the pope long ago by the Prophet Daniel, who says in chapter xi, "He shall not understand married women," or "he will not respect married women."[3] But harlots he was to respect, and worse than that. But he who would be a true Christian must grant that this saying of God is true, and believe that God was not drunk when He spoke the words and instituted marriage. Well, if I had made a thousand vows, and if a hundred thousand angels, not to mention a poor maggot-bag or two like the pope, were to say that I should do without a helpmate, and that it is good to be alone, what would I care for those vows and commands when they are set up against this word, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help for him"? Unless it should happen that God Himself by some miracle made an exception of me, inasmuch as St. Paul says in I Corinthians vii, it must be a special gift.

Dan. 11:37

Gen. 2:18

1 Cor. 7:7

Now contrast God and man! God says, "I desire that

---

[1] Luther refers to the praises of monasticism, which imply that a wife is a hindrance to a man if he would live a spiritual life.

[2] The exact reference has not been traced. Chemnitz, Examen, Pars iii, Loc. ii, Cap. iii, writes, "What Jerome writes, that men must abstain from marriage in order that they may pray worthily, that is, as the second Synod of Carthage says, in order that they may obtain simply what they ask of God, is blasphemy."

[3] R. V. reads, "Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god." Luther translates "er wird weder Frauenliebe, noch einiges Gottes achten." Douay, after the Vulgate, "and he shall follow the lust of women, and he shall not regard any gods," which seems to go back to the Septuagint. Luther must have had the Hebrew in mind, although there is no special reason for translating "married women."

The Vow of Celibacy

you have an help and be not alone, and to Me that arrangement seems good." Man says, "Not so, Thou art mistaken; I vow to Thee to do without an help, and to me it seems good to be alone." What is this but to correct God? And what is it to correct God but to exalt one's self above God? How can such a vow or command possibly be valid or binding? Rather, how could such a vow possibly escape being worse than any form of adultery or unchastity? What good fortune could befall such a vow and such chastity, which without the support of a divine miracle is based only on a man's own wanton choice and so blasphemously contradicts God's word? If God has worked a miracle, there is no need of a vow. If God has not worked a miracle, the vow is contrary to God and blasphemes God's Word and work.

Tradition

But let us hear some of the things they say in their blind folly. Their favorite arguments, of which they boast loudly, are these: That this estate of chastity and the vow are an ancient tradition, taught and confirmed by very many councils and holy fathers since the days of the Apostles and are now accepted as such throughout the world. They argue that it is not to be believed that God would have permitted so many people to err throughout so long a period of time. Good. But if I were to ask them whether they were willing to die for their conviction that so old a practice is not wrong and that the councils and fathers have not erred, they would think twice when death drew near. But now that they live they boldly and bravely say and write[1] that men ought to believe what they themselves would then seriously doubt. Well, let them die in that faith; I will not.

Antiquity as an Authority

But what do they have to say to the fact that God is more ancient than all their councils and fathers? Then, too, He is greater and counts for more than all councils and fathers. Scripture also is more ancient and counts for more than all councils and fathers. Furthermore,

[1] A characteristic alliteration, "frech und frysch schreyen und schreyben."

the angels are all on the side of God and the Scripture. Further, the practice which existed from the time of Adam is also more ancient than the practice which originated with the popes. If age, therefore, length of years, the greatness, the number and the holiness of men, are sufficient reason for believing anything, why do they believe men, whose history dates back only a short time, and why do they not believe God, Who is the most ancient, the most,[1] the greatest, the most holy, the most mighty of all? Why do they not believe all the angels, when one of them counts for more than all the popes? Why do they not believe the Scripture, one saying of which has more authority than the books of the whole world? Why do they not believe the human nature which is in us by God's creation,[2] since one work of God is mightier than all the words, thoughts and dreams of all men and devils?

Job 26:11

The Authority of the Word

We ought, indeed, if there were a spark of reason in us, to be heartily ashamed to harbor a single doubt, to say nothing of raising objections, when we hear God's Word, at the sound of which all angels bow and every creature is astonished. Now here we have a word of God, which says, "Thou shalt not be alone, but have an help, unless I make other provision for thee." Before this word we ought to tremble and be afraid, as all angels and all creatures from the beginning of the world bear witness. Instead we come along and exalt high above it a vow that we made yesterday and a dream of the pope that is of recent origin; we must even hear men's comment, "Such a vow cannot err, God has not permitted these fathers to make a mistake"! Thus it is to pass belief that poor men can err who live and dream for a moment, and it is to be worthy of belief that the everlasing God does err in His Word and works, and that all angels and creatures make mistakes. Fie, fie, fie! How unspeakable is our blindness, how mad and senseless our blasphemy!

Gen. 2:18

---

[1] Der Meyste.
[2] Der Creaturn nicht, die ynn uns geschaffen ist.

But so it must be: God's Word must be the most marvelous thing in heaven and on earth. That is why it must at one and the same time do the two opposite works, give perfect light and glory to those who believe, and bring utter blindness and shame upon those who do not believe it. To the former it must be the most certain and best known of all things, to the latter it must be the most unknown and most hidden of all things. The former must praise and bless it above all things, the latter must blaspheme and slander it above all things, in order that in this way it may have its perfect course and accomplish no small works, but strange, terrible works in the hearts of men. As St.
2 Cor. 4:3 Paul says in II Corinthians iv, that our Gospel, if it is hidden, is hidden in them that are lost.

The Authority of the Church

They have another very fine way of proving their position. They will yield to us so far as to admit that we are correct and that this is what God has said in the Scripture; but they claim that the Church has changed and abrogated all that, and therefore men must not marry unless a Council reaffirm what God has said and grant them permission, in order that the decrees of the Church may not be broken and obedience to the church be maintained.[1] Certainly, may God make obeisance to you, dear younkers! That were fine, to give to you the honor that belongs to God and to exalt you above Him, and then to say, "It is right and must be done because you permit it; but even if God did command it, and, as you yourselves admit, clearly wants men to do it, yet it would not be right nor ought it be done unless you also added your advice and consent." Who gave you power to change a word of God, to abrogate it and to restore it? So then, we are to lead God to school and smooth the feathers of the

[1] So Johann Fabri, in a book published at Rome, August 13, 1522, "Against some new teachings of Martin Luther which are altogether foreign to the Christian religion," a reply to which, prepared by Justus Jonas and accompanied by a letter from Luther to Jonas, appeared in 1523. See Weimar Ed., xii, 236 and 81 ff.

Holy Ghost![1] Tell me, who has ever heard a more abominable abomination? And these are the utterances of men who claim to rule over souls!

Councils

We, on the contrary, state our position thus: Councils may make decisions and pass decrees in matters that are temporal or that have not yet been clearly set forth. But when we can plainly see what is God's Word and will, we will wait neither for councils nor for the decrees and decisions of the Church, but rather fear God and boldly do according to that Word and will of God without stopping to think whether councils shall be called or not. For I am not willing to wait until councils decide whether we are to believe in God the Father, Maker of heaven and earth, in His only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in the Holy Ghost, etc. And just so with all other manifest, clear and certain portions of the Scriptures which it is necessary and profitable for me to believe. For, suppose the councils should delay, and I should have to die before they reached a decision, where should my soul stay meanwhile, since it is not to know what to believe, but await the decision of the Councils, and yet I need faith here on earth?

I say further, Though one, two, a hundred, a thousand and even more councils should decree that "spiritual" men might marry, or anything else which the Word of God has already decreed shall be done or left undone, I would rather look through my fingers and trust to God's mercy in the case of a man who had all his lifelong kept one, two or three whores than in the case of a man who had married a wife in obedience to the decrees of such councils, and without such a decree would not venture to marry. And I would in the name of God command and advise all men that any man who would not lose his soul's salvation must not take a wife on the strength of such a decree, but rather live in stricter chastity than before;[2] or if that were

[1] Correct the Holy Ghost.

[2] The very same argument, applied to the use of the two kinds in the Lord's Supper, occurs in the Formula missae, 1523.

impossible for him, he should not despair in his weakness and sin, but call upon God's help. And I will give my reason.

Blasphemy

Fornication or unchastity is indeed a great sin, but compared with blasphemy it is slight. For even Christ Himself says in Matthew xi, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, although their sins exceeded simple unchastity, than for Capernaum, Bethsaida, and all the great saints and Pharisees of that time. And in Matthew xxi He says further that harlots and sinners shall go into the kingdom of heaven before the Pharisees and scribes, although these were pious, chaste and honorable men. Why? Because they resisted the words of God, the Gospel, whereas harlots and sinners, although they did sin, at least did not resist the Gospel.

Matt. 11:22 f.

Matt. 21:31

Now this applies to our case thus: He who takes a wife on the authority of the decrees of men or in accordance with the decisions of councils, and without them would not do so, although he already has the decision and decree of God enabling him to do so, despises the Word of God in his heart and tramples it underfoot; for he exalts men above God, and trusts more in the words and teachings of men than in the Word and teachings of God. In so doing he acts directly contrary to faith, denies God Himself, and sets up men as false gods in the place of God. In this way his body becomes lawfully married and chaste outwardly, through the nonsense of men, but his soul within him becomes a twofold harlot and adulteress through unbelief, distrust, despising of God, idolatry and denial of God's holy Word; and who can enumerate all the abominations of such an apostate heart? Is not this a fine change in a man's chastity, to become lawfully married outwardly, and doubly unmarried inwardly? Behold, then, how faithful are the thoughts of those who want to bring relief in this matter by means of their councils and decrees, and do away with obedience to the Word of God!

How much smaller, do you suppose, is the sin of him

who keeps a whore than of him who takes a wife under those conditions, and how much nearer to God's mercy is he? Especially if that fornicator would most gladly be married and yet is compelled by the weakness of his nature and the authority of men who forbid him to marry, and so is driven into sin? Do you not think that God will look upon his heart which would gladly do according to God's Word, and acknowledges it too, and does not deny it, and gives God the honor due to Him in His Word? Will not God be so much the more merciful to him because he is disgraced in the eyes of the world? Although I hold that such a case will never occur. For to him to whom God grants a knowledge of His Word, He will also grant chastity, or else He will permit him to live in a secret marriage, or will strengthen him if he contracts a public marriage and is persecuted and made to suffer because of it.[1]

The Unfortunate Sinner

Therefore if any "spiritual" man wants to marry, let him hold before himself God's Word, rely upon it, and in God's name marry, regardless of whether councils precede or follow. Let him say, God says in Genesis i and ii that I am a man and you a woman, and that we shall and must come together in order to multiply; from that no one can and no one shall prevent us, nor forbid us to do it; nor do we have it in our power to vow to do otherwise. Rely-

The Authority of God's Word

Gen. 1 and 2

[1] Here as elsewhere Luther's interest centers in the conscience, not in the legal aspect of marriage. He supposes the case of a man whom the authorities forbid to marry, but who cannot be strong enough to live as a chaste celibate, and asks whether God will not be merciful to such a man if under the twofold compulsion he sins. But the case seems impossible to him, because such a man, understanding God's Word, will marry in secret, or, if his secret marriage is discovered, will endure the persecution that may come upon him for it. But even the living with a harlot who is the man's own, and not a public character, is a form of secret marriage, without the honor of marriage in the eyes of men. It is perhaps difficult to distinguish between a secret marriage and the keeping of a harlot, from the standpoint of the public. The difference lies altogether in the consciences of the man and the woman. The older church applied the term "concubine" "to those who were as legally wives as it was possible to make them." "The connection was a recognized and almost a legal one, following the traditions of the Roman law, by which it was legitimate and permanent, so long as the parties respectively remained unmarried." H. C. Lea, History of Sacerdotal Celibacy, 3d ed., i, 230 f.

ing upon that word we make the venture and do it, in sheer despite and contradiction of all councils and churches, all decrees of men, all vows, customs and all things else that may be or ever have been opposed to it. Let us close eyes and ears, and take only God's Word into our hearts! And if councils and men were to permit and allow us to do so in future, we do not desire their permission, and because of their permission we will neither do nor leave undone anything.

What the Church Must Do

For I will not be satisfied if councils or the church, as they understand it, shall permit or decree such a change; nor do I desire to be beholden to them for it, nor ask it of them, nor request it of them. They shall and must do it, and not that alone; first of all, they shall restore to God the honor due Him, and confess openly before all the world that in forbidding marriage they have contradicted God and His holy Word like the soul-murderers they are, and have flooded the whole world with unchastity, condemned the Word of God, made the devil their false god and exalted themselves above God, and thus, through the sheer inspiration of the devil instead of the Holy Spirit, have been no bishops and teachers, but wolves, thieves, murderers and seducers.

Let them first of all confess these abominations, repent of them and make satisfaction for them, and in this way of their own accord humble themselves before the whole world and once more honor the Word of God which they have so shamefully suppressed, blasphemed and dishonored throughout the world. As soon as they do this, and no sooner, we will acknowledge and heed their permission. Yes, you say, but when will that be? When will they do that? Well then, let them keep their councils and decisions, and live according to them; we will not be guided by them, we will neither hear nor see them. I also know quite well they will not do it, for they wish to be admired, and not to be looked upon as men who have been in error until now. But we will yet succeed in teaching them that they

must do it, whether they intend to or not. They shall be put to shame openly, as Paul says in II Timothy ii, whether they do it willingly or unwillingly; just that and nothing else, even though their number were ten times as great as it is, and every one of them had as much power as all put together have now. 2 Tim. 3:9

God's Word will do it; it is even now breaking forth and disclosing their shame. That light they shall not extinguish. The more they try to extinguish it the more they will blow upon it and cause it to burn brighter. That is what is already happening, however much they rage and are vexed. It shall not help them at all to say, "Can one impotent monk be wiser than the whole world?" Yes, the monk is impotent, but Another shall be omnipotent, and make all of them impotent enough. Trust confidently to that. For that the true God should let men shape His nose to suit themselves, and permit His Word, to which He has pledged Himself, to avail only in case it should please the poor filth-sacks, that I leave them to hope, as they deserve. But they shall learn the truth in time. **The Power of God's Word**

In olden times the Romans did the same thing. They had brought together in their city the gods of all peoples; but when they heard of Jesus Christ that some men regarded Him as a God, they would not recognize Him as a God, for no other reason than that there was no decree of the Roman senate authorizing it, and the belief had originated elsewhere. For these proud men thought that they had the power to say who should be a god, and that no one else dare be a god. What was this else than to say, "We Roman senators are gods above all gods, and may make gods of whomsoever we will"? And that was what they did. Therefore Christ could not become God among them. That is what our younkers are doing now with their councils. God's Word is to wait and not be God's Word until they give it permission. **A Parallel from History**

Yes, they are worse than the Romans, for the Romans

would at least have made a god of him who was regarded as a god. Our council-younkers want to decree what is entirely their own, and then it is to be right merely because they decree it, no matter whether God has spoken before or not, whether there was a God before or not. And they have the idea that, if God should speak a word even in our day, they ought to have authority to pass judgment and sentence upon it, to decree, abrogate, permit, or forbid it; in every way they regard our God as a piece of soft wax which they can mould into a pig or a crow or whatever other form they wish. That is the way the Jews also turned God into a golden calf. These things are indeed horrible and abominable, and enough to cause the heart of a Christian to break.

Hope for Conversion of Bishops

But it is my hope that Christ has preserved for Himself some bishops, or will yet preserve them,[1] so that they will take serious thought and come to the true knowledge of God and either give up their horrible and abominable office or restore it to the condition of a true episcopal office. And even if not one should be converted, or the conversions be kept secret, yet we who have the clear Word of God must not hold back, nor look behind us to see what their decisions are or whether they follow us. For Christ was unwilling that St. Peter should ask or concern himself about what John or any one else would do, but said, "What is that to thee? follow thou Me"; as much as to say, Since you have My word, it is your duty to go your way and do its bidding, and to leave the others to Me, whether they follow or do not follow.

John 21:20ff.

Celibacy is Condemned

Therefore everyone, though he were as hard as a stone, ought deservedly to be frightened when he hears and feels

[1] A reference to George of Polentz, bishop of Samland, who in a sermon preached on Christmas Day, 1523, acknowledged his adherence to the evangelical teaching, and on May 30, 1525, turned over his episcopal authority to Albrecht. Compare Kirchengeschichtliche Studien, Leipzig, 1888, p. 154 ff. On January 2, 1524, Duke George already reported of him, "It is also said that the bishop of Samland . . . is in some measure almost an adherent of the Lutheran heresy." TSCHACKERT, Urkundenbuch, Bd. i, p. 45; Weimar Ed., xii, p. 240, note.

that his vow of celibacy, unless God has worked a miracle, goes beyond and contradicts this word of God, "It is my will that you be not alone, but have an help," and that celibates live under the terrible sentence in which Daniel says, "He will not respect married women," which is as much as to say, It is true that he will avoid married women, not because he loves chastity or serves God, as he will pretend in order to deceive the world, but that he may have an easy life and be spared the worries and difficulties of married life, and yet neither live chastely nor serve God, but be so much the freer to practice harlotry and knavery. That is because he does not understand the words of God in which He says it is not good for a man to be alone. For, as was said above, these words are spirit and life, as are all the words of God, and must be understood by faith; so that their meaning is not that this good is good for the flesh (nay, it is trouble, as St. Paul says), but for the spirit.[1] For in God's sight it is a precious and noble good work to train and educate children, to rule wife and servants in a godly manner, to earn one's living in the sweat of one's face, and to endure much misfortune and many difficulties in the person of wife, children, servants and others. Such good does not make much show. "It is an evil," says the pope, "and hinders a man in his service of God," that is to say, it is a hindrance to pleasant, lazy living. But he who believes it and rightly understands it, sees how good it is for the soul, although it is an evil for the flesh and its lusts,

Gen. 2:18

Dan. 11:37

John 6:63

1 Cor. 7:28

Marriage is Honored

For this reason also God has done marriage the honor of putting it into the Fourth Commandment, immediately after the honor due to Him, and commands, "Thou shalt honor father and mother." Show me an honor in heaven or on earth, apart from the honor of God, that can equal this honor! Neither the secular nor the spiritual estate has been so highly honored. And if God had given utter-

Exod. 20:12

[1] Compare Luther's Exposition of the Seventh Chapter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, 1523, Weimar Ed., xii, 136 f.

ance to nothing more than this Fourth Commandment with reference to married life, men ought to have learned quite well from this Commandment that in God's sight there is no higher office, estate, condition and work (next to the Gospel which concerns God Himself) than the estate of marriage.

Argument for Keeping the Vow

But many still come with the old argument, and waste much breath over it, that it is dishonorable for a man to make a vow of chastity to God and not to keep it, since even in the eyes of the world he who does not keep his vow and becomes a perjurer is branded as faithless and dishonorable. Some of the nobility especially work themselves blue in the face with such foolish talking, and they most of all who ought indeed to make many vows and prate much about the making of vows, but have made little effort to keep any vows at all; they have never in their lives seriously thought of wanting to keep the least bit of what they so solemnly vowed to God in their baptism, nor of acknowledging that they still owe it; so entirely does the beam in their own eyes escape their notice, and so clearly do they see the splinter in other men's eyes.

Matt. 7:3 ff.

They are rude, hardened hearts, which neither feel things themselves nor will learn from others, like the smiths' anvils,[1] as Job says; they will have their mad way! How often shall I say that a vow which cannot be kept and is made contrary to God's Word is no vow and must not be kept? It is like the man who says, "My mother made a vow that I should become a bishop."[2] Now, if I were to ask them if a man who vowed to commit adultery or to kill an innocent man, must keep his vow, or whether I must keep my vow if I have vowed to cling to the sky and to ride on the sunbeams, or to float upon the clouds,

Job 41:15

[1] Luther here follows the Vulgate, which is translated in Douay, "His heart shall be as hard as a stone, and as firm as a smith's anvil."

[2] In the treatise Ursache und Antwort, dass Jungfrauen Klöster göttlich verlassen mögen, 1523, Luther explains, "Once upon a time I heard a learned man say, 'My mother made a vow that I should become a bishop; how shall I keep it?'" Berlin Ed., iv, 57.

I hope they would have to say, No; the first vow would be wrong and must not be kept, and the second would be foolish and could be trusted to keep itself from being fulfilled.

In this case also I say, therefore, We are all created to do as our parents did, to beget and raise up children. This is a duty which God has laid upon us, commanded us and implanted in us, as is proved by the members of our bodies, by our daily emotions, and by the example of all men. Now if God Himself does not perform a miracle, and you remain unmarried and vow chastity, you do exactly the same as he who vows adultery or something else that God has forbidden. And we see and understand how it remains unfulfilled of itself, because it is an impossible and foolish vow, and why unchastity grows only the more rampant and shameful, until it has become unmentionable. Yet these obdurate men wish to compel a man not to feel that he has a man's body, and a woman not to feel that she has a woman's body.

The Absence of Precedent

One more point needs to be considered. I have scarcely a doubt that many a bishop, abbot, and other members of the spiritual estate would marry if they were not the first, if they had abundant precedent and such marriage had become customary, so that it no longer brought disgrace or danger upon a man, but was approved and honorable in the sight of the world. Indeed, who would not wish that? What do we say to this objection? If you have God's Word, which you ought and can obey, and wait for others to do it first, it is just as if I were to say, I will not believe in God nor serve Him before I see all Turks and heathen and Jews believing and serving God. Wait, if you will. But in the meantime you will go to the devil with the heathen and the Jews, because you despise God's Word, and are willing to serve Him not for His own sake, but for the sake of other men, and in so doing honor and regard men more than God and His Word.

Lot's Wife

These I may liken to Lot's wife, who also looked behind her to see what the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were

Gen. 19:26 Gen. 19:17 doing, and was turned into a pillar of salt. For she too had received a command not to look behind her, but to obey the word of the angel without turning. Christ Himself

Luke 17:31 f. makes a similar application in Luke xvii, where He speaks of the evil days and of how men shall be led astray and deceived, and gives warning that no one shall think of what is behind him nor turn again into his house to take anything, and says, "Remember Lot's wife"; which was as much as

John 21:22 to say, in the words He spoke to Peter, "Follow thou me." Let him who tarries tarry, let him who waits wait; do thou look upon no one, but upon My word alone, and then go boldly forward. This is what we also in these perilous times must do in this matter of marriage; if you feel your nature and now know that God wishes you to be married, you must go ahead, although you be the first and only one to marry, regardless of what all men, friends and foes, sing and say about it. If you are put to shame and slandered for it, know this: God's Word is greater, His praise is mightier, His testimony is more glorious than that of all men, even if there were more than a thousand worlds full of them.

Serving the World

And since you abstain from marriage or put it off not out of regard for God, but only out of regard for the world, you can readily see whom you are serving, and that all your living in chastity meanwhile is labor lost. He who wants to wait until the world speaks well of divine things or is not offended in them, must indeed wait long. But it is abominable that the devil has brought it to pass that among Christians a man must be timid, afraid and worried even about getting married, although marriage has from the beginning been and still is free and honorable even among the heathen and throughout the world. So completely has he by means of the papal government destroyed all of God's Word and work, and for the first time raises the question whether it is a man's duty and privilege to be a man, and whether the vow by which he vows not to be a man is valid.

Sins as Seen by God and the World

But that is right and proper for the world; that is the way its god and prince, the devil, must govern it. For it does the same in all other things as well. Theft is the smallest sin in God's sight, because it affects only temporal goods; but the world punishes it more severely than all others. Next to it comes adultery, which is a much greater sin; and that is now unpunished throughout the world.[1] Next comes murder; and that brings a man honor in the world, if he is bold and wicked enough to slay a man. But greater than all these, the miserable worship of God practised by the spiritual estate is the worst of all sins on earth, contrary to God's majesty, honor, Word and work; and that is not only unpunished, but claims the greatest honor, wealth, power and friends, and everything else on earth, as if it were altogether holy, heavenly, divine.

Summary

But in order that this letter may not grow too lengthy, my dear knights, and since I have written so much on this subject, I will now end, and humbly beg you in the Lord and exhort you as a friend, in the words of St. Paul, "Receive not the grace in vain." For it is written in Isaiah xlix, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee. Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The Word of God is clear and calls you; you have reason and occasion enough to give heed to it, even for the sake of temporal wealth; the peril of consciences and of daily sins in the weak flesh urges you; the impossibility of keeping the foolish vow compels you; the spiritual estate and order in itself is worthless; we are not to wait for a council nor put off marrying until a council has decided the question, because we have the command and demand of the Word of God; nor are we to delay and see what others are doing, but you and every one must break the way for himself, rush into

2 Cor. 6:1
Isa. 49:8
2 Cor. 6:2

[1] Weimar Ed. quotes from a letter of Ulscenius to Capito dated July 20, 1522, "Martin and Melanchthon want adulterers and blasphemers to be beaten with rods of iron, but not thieves." KOLDE, Analecta Lutherana, 37 f.

2 Sam. 19: 10 ff. the Jordan before king David, now that he is coming again into his kingdom and his son Absalom, the rebel, is dead.

All things urge, compel, invite and incite you at this time; you will greatly honor God and His Word and give weak consciences a comforting example, so that God's Word may again be kept. There is nothing to hinder you from this course except the foolish opinion of the mad world which will say, "Well, are the Teutonic Knights doing that?" But since we know that even the prince of this world is judged, we are not to doubt that this and every other opinion of the world is already condemned in God's sight. Only go to it boldly and confidently; set God before your eyes in true faith, turn your back upon the world with its grumbling, its loud and angry objections, and neither listen nor look how Sodom and Gomorrah are sinking behind you or what becomes of them!

John 16:11

But the gracious God, Who through Jesus Christ our Lord has again caused the light of His grace to rise upon us, enlighten, admonish and strengthen your hearts with the power of His Holy Spirit, in firm faith and fervent love, that in this and in all things else you may do His fatherly and gracious will, to the honor and praise of His holy Gospel, to the comfort and help of all believers in Christ. To Him be thanks, praise and glory forever. Amen.

The grace of God be with you all. Amen.

INDEX

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

INDEX

ABRAHAM'S BOSOM, 194
seed, 197
Absolution, 51
a jesting, 59f
a thoughtless, 59f
without faith avails not, 61
See also, Forgiveness
Achacius (Acacius) St, 244
Adam's fall, 108, 194
Afflictions, reason for, 129
Albert, bishop of Riga, 406
Albert of Brandenburg, 406f
Albert of Mainz, Elector, Archbp., 406
Albrecht of Mainz, 7
Aleander, 9
Alexander VI, 103
Allegories, 334
Anabaptists, 226
Antibull, Luther's, 9
Antichrist, 51, 53, 57, 68, 71ff, 76, 85, 94, 97, 101, 103, 111, 116, 204, 303, 368
Antiochus, King, 113
Aquinas, Thomas, 69, 95, 263
Arians, 88
Aristotle, 93, 304, 331f, 336, 384f
Armor, St. Paul's, 311
the breastplate, 311
the helmet, 313
the shield, 312
the sword, 313
Articles not necessary to salvation, On, 94f
Articles of faith, 91f, 110
basis of Roman authority to make, 93
Attrition, 50
Augsburg, 303
Augsburg Confession, 226
Augustine, St, 16, 23, 34f, 42, 50, 54, 62, 86f, 88, 101, 108f, 114, 129, 154, 228, 254f, 273, 281, 336, 341, 349, 351f, 362, 370, 385
Augustinian Order, 7, 277f, 405
Authority
arbitrary a. of the pope, 63
Christian subject to sec., 239
constituted, 210
how far it extends, 25

judged by God, 210
reason for, 211
St. Paul on, 255
St. Peter on, 256
temporal, 210
See also Law, Ordinance, Temporal Power

BAN, 79f.
Baptism
and faith, 21
divine sign, 21
questions in, 19
sin remains after, 25ff
See also, Sacraments
Basel, 277
Bavaria, Dukes of, 225
Bede, Ven., 386
Behemoth, 170, 292
Benedictine Order, 398
Benediction, O. T., 154
Bias, a Grecian sage, 124
Bishops
derivation of word, 322
duty of, 259
no right to burden with laws, 295
office of, 262
secular authority of, 229, 260, 262
Blasphemy, 418
Bless, to, Meaning of, 158
Body (third part of man), 133
Bohemia, 277
Bohemian Brethren, 67, 71, 83
Both kinds, 67ff, 303
Greek Church administers, 71
Brandenburg, Elector of, 225
Bull, papal, 7, 8
Decet Romanum Pontificem, 9
Exsurge Domine, 8

CAJETAN, CARDINAL, 7, 303
Canon Law, 80, 103f, 295, 326, 328, 385, 413
Canons, penitential, 41
Canticle, see, Magnificat
Carthusian Order, 398
Celestin, pope, 405
Celibacy, 410
a tradition, 414
argument for keeping vow of, 424
authority of the Church for, 416
condemned, 422f
councils and, 420
vow of, 414f
See, Chastity, Priests
Clement III, pope, 405

Charles, Duke of Burgundy, 273
Charles, Emp., 8, 123
Chastity, 410ff, 418f
See, Celibacy
Christ,
acknowledged the sword, 238, 246
and the Church, 193
Body of, 63
did not wield the sword, 238, 246
expounds the law, 248
Head of the Church, 343
His office, 246
Kingdom of, 246
merits of, 75f
mouth of, 215f
our only Master, 218, 262
paintings of, 208
rule of, 237
rules by Holy Spirit, 238
Seed of Abraham, 194f
Spirit of, 215
teachings of, 229
the Rock, 84
type of, 238
without C. all world in sin, 194
Word of, 208, 215
See also, Incarnation
Christian, first bp. of Prussia, 405f
Christian liberty, 315
Christian life, 216, 238, 239
Christians, 234
all equal, 262
cannot compel to be, 248
Christ only head of, 262
do not resist evil, 247
duty to government and office, 241, 245
may bear the sword, 241
need no law, 234, 237
non-Christians, 248
not use sword among themselves, 238
or for selves, 248
on swearing, 249
priesthood, 319ff
service of others, 240, 241f, 245
submits to sword in love, 239
why, invoke, wield, sword for others, 249
Christianity not bound to pope and Rome, 82
Church, 394ff
and state, 225f
believing C. is building on Rock, 84
external, 251
has no power over souls, 252
laws, 216
of Christ, 397

of pope, 397ff
unity of, 98
Civil officers, 249
Clergy, 206
Commandments, 233
the first, 167
Common man, 206, 210, 220f, 261
Common people, 293, 396
Complines, 104
Confess sins, 214
Confession, 40
Conflict of flesh and spirit, 26
Conscience, 253f
liberty of, 375
Constance, 303
See, Council
Contrition, 40f, 43f, 47ff, 57ff
Danger of false, 44
not sufficient, 59
See also, Judas' repentance
Council (Church), 94ff, 97
Basel, 71
Constance, 97, 277, 296
Latern, 93
Councils, 251
decisions of, 417, 421f
no power over soul, 252
Counsellors, 266
Counsels of perfection, 229, 233
Court of justice, 253
Creed, the, 55, 163
Cross, reason for affliction of, 129
the holy, 162
See, Sign of,
Cup, withholding of, 67ff
Custom, 325f
Customs, 38, 50, 157, 330
Cyprian, St, 28
Cyriacus, St, 391

DEATH, reason for, 129
Decet Romanum Pontificem, papal bull, 9
Decian persecution, 244
Decretals, 98
Diet of Augsburg, 7
Dionysius, 346
Divine institutions, 328
Dobrzin, Order of, 406
Doctrines, human, 143
Dominican Order, 95
Donatists, 50, 62
Douay reading, 148
Dresden, 277

Duns Scotus, John, 95 (note), 338, 386
Dürer, Albrecht, 121

ECK, JOHN, 8, 115, 212, 219, 277ff, 290ff, 335
Einsiedel, Haugold von, 279, 289
Emser, Jerome, 212, 219, 277ff, 282ff, 289ff, 310ff
his armor, 310
his dagger of lead, 332ff
his lies, 342ff
his long spear, 325ff
his oath, 310
Erasmus, Desiderius, 124
Erfurt, 204, 213, 277
Erhard von Queiss, 407
Estates of the empire, 8
'Every creature of God,' 245
Excommunication, 79
external penalty only, 79
Exegesis, Protestant, 279
Exsurge Domine, papal bull, 8, 119, 284

FABARELLA, FRANCIS, archbp, card, 303
Fables, see, Illustrations
Fabri, Johann, 416
Faith, 259
a dead, 136
a free work, 253
a living, 136
and works, 67
everything depends on, 59, 135
individual responsible for own, 253
made righteous solely by, 134
makes a new creature, 243
more necessary than sacraments, 20
necessary for forgiveness of sins, 54f
necessary for worthy reception of sacraments, 17
result of lack of, 135
Fathers and the Scriptures, 334
teachings of the, 332, 335, 337
Faustus, 386
Flesh and Spirit, 25ff, 109
Forgiveness, not dependent on priestly office, 61
Forgiveness of sin, 54f
Force, use of, 259
Franciscan Order, 95
Frederick, meaning of name, 238
Frederick, Elector of Saxony, 7f, 119, 123, 226
Frederick of Saxony (Grandmaster Teut. Kts), 406
Freedom of will, 108f.

GALLOWS-REPENTANCE, See, Judas' repentance
Generation (*generationes, geschlechter*), 158, 166f

George, Duke of Saxony, 225f, 227f, 422
George von Polentz, bp, 407, 422
Gereon, St, 244
Gerson, Jean Charlier de, 338, 386
God, almighty, 163
  alone has power over souls, 252
  alone to be exalted, 163
  arm of, 177
  desecration of name, 164f
  enemies of, 181f, 207
  gifts of, 159
  kingdom of, 234
  men's attitude to, illustrated, 141
  mercy of, 169ff, 192
  name of, 164f
  on praising, 159f
  power of, 177
  pure love for, 140
  regards the lowly, 127f, 130
  selfish love to, 140
  six divine works, 167ff
    the first, 169ff
    the second, 177ff
    the third, 182f
    the fourth, 185
    the fifth, 185f,
    the sixth, 185f
  when magnified by us, 137
  works of, 127, 129, 136, 150, 152, 167ff, 177ff, 191
  wrath of, 209f
  See also, Grace, Kingdom, Word
Good works, 98ff, 102, 107, 143, 151
  commandments of, 91f
  over-plus of, 151
Gospel, 238
  foundation of, 196
  of the kingdom, 234
  proclaim, 215
Government, Christian's duty to, 238
  common Christian world g. impossible, 237
  for the people, 264
  limit to worldly, 257
  See also, Authority, Law, Ordinance, Secular, Spiritual, Temporal power
Grace, bestowed freely, 58
  need of, 46
  offer of, conditioned only on faith, 60
  seeking, 110
  what it does, 50
  what it is, 159
Greek Church, 71f, 81, 83, 112, 317, 341
Greek readings, 32, 135, 146, 158, 400

Gregory, St, 101, 102, 107, 112
Gurk, Raymund von, card., 277

HADRIAN VI, 407
Hannibal, 310
Hanseatic League, 406
Hebrew readings, 360, 369
Hecuba, myth of, 316
Hellebore, 252, 391
Henry V, 144
Henry VI, 405
Heresy, 259
  suppression of, 259
Heretic, burning of, 103f, 343f
  definition of, 72
Holy Spirit, 236, 238
  and Scriptures, 333, 350
  Christ rules by, 238, 246
  comforts truth and right, 184
  enlightenment and instruction of, 127, 234
Hohenzollern, 407
Horace, *Ars Poetica,* 298
Hospitallers, 405
Humiliati (*humiles*), a penitential order, 144
Humilitas, 144ff
Humility, 145f
  highest of virtues, 144
  true and false, 146ff
Hus, John, 67, 85, 89, 97f, 103, 277, 296, 303ff, 316
Hutten, Ulrich von, 203, 204, 205
Hymns
  Vom Himmel hoch, 226
  See, Latin Hymns

ILLUSTRATIONS
  The ape and the cobbler, 314
  The enemy and the rope, 221
  The old frog, 333
  The shepherd and the cardinals, 154
  The three virgins, 141
Immaculate conception
  See, Our Lady
Images, 157
Imperfect, 233
Incarnation, the, 191, 193
Indulgences, 40, 75f, 77f, 104, 151, 295
  a deception, 42, 78
  for whom necessary, 78
  for whom unnecessary, 78
  removes only penalty of sin, 75
Innocent III, 73, 144
Institution
  See, Lord's Supper, Words of

Insurrection,
a Christian's duty relative to, 213ff
a result of, 212
a threat of, 261
danger of, 203ff, 206
fear of, unfounded, 207
forbidden by God, 212
never right, 211
spiritual, 216
suggestion of devil, 212
unprofitable, 211
Interim, 123
Intolerance, 220
Israel, 191ff
meaning of, 193
spiritual, 192

JEROME, ST, 16, 28, 45, 113, 242, 346, 378, 385f
Jerome of Prague, 103, 303, 316
John, Elector of Saxony, 119, 123, 226, 228
John Frederick of Saxony, 119, 123
Jovinian, 385
Jonas, Justus, 416
Judas' repentance, 43, 48, 49, 51, 53
Julian, Emp., 244
Jurists, 263

KARL VON MILTITZ, 8
Karsthans, 204ff
Keys, the, 50ff, 89f
given for sacrament of penance, 62
sacrament of, 62
Kingdom,
cannot exist without law, 250
gospel of, 234, 236
of Christ, 238
of earth, 248
of God, 234, 237, 242, 246, 250, 256, 395
of heaven, 248
of peace, 239
of world, 234, 236, 237, 242, 250, 256
Kingdoms, the two, 234, 237
Knights of St. John (Malta), 405
Knights of the Sword of Livonia, 406
Knights Templars, 405

LADISLAS, King of Hungary and Poland, 105
Lang, John, 277
Last Supper, see Lord's Supper
Latin Hymns
Jam Christe sol justitiæ, 44
Regina cœli lætare, 162
Verbum supernum, 69

Law, 354ff
Christ expounds, 248
Christians need no, 234f, 237
exceptions to, 263
for wicked, 248
of love and restitution, 271f
of nature, 272
preaching of, 355ff, 359
prince's administration of, 263
purpose of, 235, 361
reason for giving of, 196, 248
those under, 236
unrighteous need, 235
without l. no government exists, 250
See, Authority, Secular, Temporal power
Leipzig, 277f, 290
Leipzig Disputation, 8, 277, 290
Lent, 157
Letter and Spirit, 319, 346ff, 353ff
Lombard, Peter, 33
Lord's Prayer, 31, 166
Lord's Supper, 22, 254
Institution of, 68
on the reception of, 65f
two kinds in, 254
Louvain, University of, 8
Love,
imperfect, obstacle to entering heaven, 38ff
what it does, 243
works of, 239f
Lowly, 185
Lucifer, 62, 97, 138, 257, 267
and his angels, 38
Luther
antibull, 9
appeals to general council, 7
burns pope's books, 295
burns pope's bull, 8
excommunicated, 7
his books burned, 225
hymns, see, Hymns
letters of, 9, 119, 120, 203, 204, 205, 406, 408, 416
on use of his name, 218
papal bull against, 8, 284
prosecution before ecclesiastical authorities, 7
put under ban, 225
student under Emser, 277
syllogism of, 392
translation of New Testament, 225
edict against, 225f

LUTHER, Writings of, (chronologically arranged)
1515-16
Commentary on the Romans, 280

1517
The Ninety-five Theses, 38, 75, 277

1518
Heidelberg Theses, 108
Resolutiones disputationum, 7, 17, 36, 39, 55, 78, 79, 89, 94, 102, 103, 105, 106, 114
Sermon on Excommunication, 79
Sermon on Indulgence and Grace, 40
Sermon on the Worthy Preparation of the Heart to Receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist, 66

1519
Defence against the Malignant Judgment of John Eck, 81
Disputation of John Eck and Martin Luther, 77, 78, 97, 111, 113, 114
Explanation of the Articles Discussed at Leipzig, 25, 91, 96, 98
Sermon on Repentance, 43, 47, 52, 54, 57, 59, 64
Sermon on the Sacrament of Penance, 61
Treatise on Baptism, 25
Treatise on the Blessed Sacrament, 67

1520
Assertio omnium articulorum per Bullam Leonis X novissimam damnatorum, 9
Larger Treatise on Usury, 115
Open Letter to the Christian Nobility, 210, 225, 226, 230, 278, 279, 280, 311, 327, 342, 389, 407
The Babylonian Captivity, 22, 41, 68, 71, 295
The Fourteen of Consolation, 120
The Papacy at Rome, 280, 327, 333, 342, 349, 353, 394
Treatise concerning the Ban, 80
Treatise on Good Works, 34, 100, 121, 134, 262, 389
Treatise on the New Testament, 234, 280
Why the Books of the Pope and of his Disciples were burned by Dr. Martin Luther, 295
Wider die Bullen des Endchrists, 9
Adversus exsecrabilem Antichristi bullam, 9

1520-1
The Magnificat, Translated and Explained, 123

1521
Ad aegocerotum Emseranum, 283
Answer to the Superchristian, Superscriptural, and Superlearned Book of Goat Emser of Leipzig, 279
Grund und Ursache aller Artikel D Martin Luthers so durch römische Bulle unrechtlich verdammt sind, 11, 343
Reply to the Answer of the Leipzig Goat, 279, 289
To the Leipzig Goat, 278, 282

1521-2
Postil, 235

1522
An Earnest Exhortation for all Christians, warning them against Insurrection and Rebellion, 205, 206

1523
Formula missae, 408, 417
Commentary on Deuteronomy, 408
Exposition of the Seventh Chapter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, 423
To the Knights of the Teutonic Order, 410
Treatise on Secular Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed, 174
Ursache und Antwort, dass Jungfrauen Klöster göttlich verlassen mögen, 424

1526
Ob Kriegsleute auch in seligen Stande sein können, 175

1531
Warnung an seine lieben Deutschen, 151

1533
Verantwortung der aufgelegten Aufruhr, 151
Operationes in Psalmos, 97
Commentary on Galatians, 376
Treatise on the Ten Commandments, 389
Treatise on Monastic Vows, 408, 410

An Argument in Defence of all the Articles of Dr. Martin Luther wrongly condemned in the Roman Bull
Introduction, 7
Text, 11ff
Preface, 11
The First Article, 17
The Second Article, 25
The Third Article, 36
The Fourth Article, 38
The Fifth Article, 40
The Sixth Article, 43
The Seventh Article, 47
The Eighth Article, 52
The Ninth Article, 53
The Tenth Article, 54
The Eleventh Article, 57
The Twelfth Article, 59
The Thirteenth Article, 61
The Fourteenth Article, 64
The Fifteenth Article, 65
The Sixteenth Article, 67

The Seventeenth Article, 75
The Eighteenth Article, 77
The Nineteenth Article, 78
The Twentieth Article, 78
The Twenty-first Article, 78
The Twenty-second Article, 78
The Twenty-third Article, 79
The Twenty-fourth Article, 80
The Twenty-fifth Article, 81
The Twenty-sixth Article, 89
The Twenty-seventh Article, 91
The Twenty-eighth Article, 94
The Twenty-ninth Article, 96
The Thirtieth Article, 97
The Thirty-first Article, 98
The Thirty-second Article, 102
The Thirty-third Article, 103
The Thirty-fourth Article, 105
The Thirty-fifth Article, 106
The Thirty-sixth Article, 108
The Thirty-seventh Article, 111
The Thirty-eighth Article, 113
The Thirty-ninth Article, 114
The Fortieth Article, 114
The Last Article, 115

The Magnificat, Translated and Explained
Introduction, 119
Text, 123ff
Letter of Dedication, 123
Text of Magnificat, 126
Introduction, 127
I—My soul . . . 131
II—And my spirit . . . 139
III—For He hath regarded . . . 144
IV—For He that is mighty . . . 158
V—And His mercy . . . 166
VI—He hath showed . . . 177
VII—He hath put down . . . 182
VIII—And exalted . . . 185
IX—He hath filled . . . 185
X—He hath holpen . . . 190
XI—As He spake . . . 193
Epilogue, 198

Answer to the Superchristian, Superscriptural, and Superlearned Book of Goat Emser of Leipzig, with a Glance at his Comrade Murner
Text, 310ff
Preface, 310
Emser's Long Spear, 325
The Emser Goat's Dagger of Lead, 332
The Letter and the Spirit, 346

The Papists' Blundering, 377
Reply to Murner, 391

To the Leipzig Goat
Introduction, 277
Text, 282ff

Reply to the Answer of the Leipzig Goat
Text, 289ff

To the Knights of the Teutonic Order
Introduction, 405
Text, 410ff

An Earnest Exhortation to all Christians, warning them against Insurrection and Rebellion
Introduction, 203
Text, 206ff

Secular Authority: To what extent it should be obeyed
Introduction, 225
Letter of Dedication, 228
Text, 230ff
Part I, 230
Part II, 250
Part III, 262

Lutherans, 218
Lying, 208

MACCABAEUS, JUDAS, 113
Magdeburg, 244
Magnificat, the, 126
definition of the word, 135f
sung daily at Vespers, 125, 191
threefold purpose of, 136
those who cannot sing it aright, 137f
Man, altogether sinful, 110
Manicheans, 341, 371
Marienburg, 405f
Marriage,
antiquity of, 414
Authority of the Word, 415f, 419f
estate of, 412
honored, 423
well-pleasing to God, 412
Marriage of priests, see, Priests
Mary, see, Our Lady
Mass, the, 63
Matrimony, 245f
Maurice of Saxony, 123
Maurice, St, 244
Maximian, Emp., 244

Maximilian, Emp., 8
Maxolini, Sylvester, (Prierias) 343f
Meissen, 277
Melanchthon, Philip, 225, 272, 278, 407
Mendicant orders, 115f
Mighty, the, 182f
Miltitz, Karl von, 8
Ministerium literae, 355
Ministerium spiritus, 355
Ministries, the two, of preaching, 353ff
Mob, Sir, 211
Moderation, 218
  practice of, 142
Monk's cowl, On merit of, 151f
Morals, commandments of, 91f
Mother of God, see, Our Lady
Murner, Thomas, 280, 391ff, 400

NOBILITY, abuse of office, 230
Non-resistance, 233, 247, 258
Netherlands, 225
Neukarsthans, 205
New creature, 49, 110
New Testament,
  edict against sale of, 225f, 257f
  translation of, 225
Nuremberg, Diet of, 407

OLD TESTAMENT, in what sense abolished, 242f
  still avails, 242
Orders of clergy, 323
Ordinance, human, 256
Ordination, 326
Origen, 346
Original sin, 25, 34, 194
  tinder of, 36
Osiander, Andreas, 407
Our Lady, 120, 130
  address to, 155, 157
  conception of, 94f
  humility of, 138f, 144f
  in Protestant system, 120
  intercession of, 198
  intercession of asked for, 125
  invocation of, 164
  lowly estate, 130, 144ff
  Mother of God, 125, 139, 161f
  proper honor to, 156
  Queen of Heaven, 120, 162
  rosary of, 345
  selflessness of, 164
  the Magnificat, 126ff
  understanding, occasion, of the Mag., 127ff
  without sin, 161

PACIFISM, 233
Panormitanus, see, Tudeschi
Papacy, 206ff
a human invention, 98
judged, 217
not mentioned in Scriptures, 81, 86, 89
pray against, 214
revealed, 217
Parables
Good Samaritan, 30
Leaven in the Meal, 30
Party names, 218
Peace, Kingdom of, 238f
Peace with God, by faith not works, 66
Peasants, 204ff
Penal Law, 231
Penance, 22, 40ff
doctrine of, not tripartite, 40
sacrament of, see Sacraments
Perfect, 233
Peter's Roman bishopric, On, 378ff
Plato, 394
Poduska, John, 277
Poland, 406
Polentz, George von, bp, 407, 422
Pope
a schismatic, 72
and his priests, 363ff
apostle of the devil, 317
arbitrary authority of, 63
basis for Rome's claim for supremacy of, 82, 85f
coat of arms of, 61f
doctor of sins, 77
fate of, 206ff, 209
fits St Paul's description of Antichrist, 368
his laws, 363ff, 376
has no right to enjoin them, 374f
hypocrisy of, 209
no right to burden Christians with laws, 295
not bound to obey his laws, 374
not head of Church, 343
pope's Holy Ghost, 115
power of, 89ff
earthly only, 89
no greater than any priest's, 90
Roman bishop, 81
Roman Nimrod, 77
St Peter's successor, 81, 378
supremacy of, 81ff
rejected, 81, 88
'Thou art Peter,' 82f, 398f
Vicar of Christ, not by His appointment, 81
See also, Antichrist, Papacy

Prague, 277
Pray, 214, 294
Prayers, 166, 172, 198, 200, 377
origin of, in psalter, 154
to Virgin, 155, 157
Preaching
of the Law, 355ff, 359
of the New Testament, 355
two ministries of, 353ff, 355
Pride, breaking spiritual (second of God's works), 177ff
vice of, 106f
Priesthood
Christian's, 319ff, 326
ecclesiastical, 320, 321f, 325f, 328f, 330
names of, 321
Priests
derivation of word, 322
marriage of, 315, 317, 381ff, 425
office, 262
vow, 385
Prince
a Christian, 263, 265
a wise, 184, 258
and evil doers, 268
and his counsellors, 266f
and waging war, 268f
belongs to his people, 264
duty of, 262, 271
on the power of a, 123f
Proclaim the Gospel, 215f, 219
Proverbs
A careful master makes a good horse, 268
A new life is the best repentance, 47
A prince, a rare bird in heaven, 184
Folly grows without watering, 335
God helps them that help themselves, 178, 270
Hoc scio pro certo, quod sicum stercore certo,
Vinco vel vincor, semper ego maculor, 286
Rich here, poor yonder, 184
The master's footsteps make a fruitful field, 268
The more men know, the worse they grow, 184
The mountains labored and brought forth a mouse, 319
Thoughts are free, 254
To sin no more is the highest repentance, 47
When man does not punish, God does, 42
Prussia, 406ff
Prussian League, 406
Purgatory, 90, 111ff, 114
souls in, 113f

QUEEN OF HEAVEN, see, Our Lady
Queiss, Erhard von, 407

REMISSION BY PRAYER, 52
Repentance, 47ff
false, 48
See Contrition
'Reply to the Wittenberg Bull,' 279, 289, 297f
Restitution, 271
Reuchlin, John, 277
Rhadinus, Thomas, 278, 284, 295, 325
Righteousness of Christ, 35
Rock, the, Christ, 84
not St Peter, 82, 85
papal authority, Rome's claim, 82
Rosary, the, 345
Rozdalowsky, Wenzel, 277
Rulers, responsibility of, 198ff

SACRAMENT
desire for the, 60
of the Altar, see, Lord's Supper
of Baptism, 20, 62
of Penance, 22, 42, 61ff
preparation for the, 66
reception of the, 65f
Sacraments, 17ff, 50
a sign, 20f
and faith, 17ff, 51
and grace, 17ff
argument for Roman doctrine, 23
common property of all Christians, 62ff
contain divine word and promise, 21
efficacious though wicked administer, 60
without faith, deadly, useless, 20
Saints, 112
invocation of, 164
rules of, 366
why lives and works recorded, 157
work-saints, 98
Salvation, civil officers in state of, 249
Salza, Hermann von, 405
Satisfaction, 40ff
Savonarola, Jerome, 103
Schaumburg, Silvester von, 203
Schismatic, definition of, 72
Schmalkald League, 123
Scriptures, 328
a four-fold sense wrongly ascribed to, 352
allegories, 334
and the priesthood, 321ff
authority of, 324f, 333f
believed rather than councils, 96
canonical, 111
clear, 16
figures of speech in, 351f

inerrant, 16
over-lord and master of all writings, 16
sense of, 346ff, 350
source of true teaching, 333f
spiritual body of Christ, 16
the standard, 335
use and interpretation of, 334, 347ff
See, Letter and Spirit
Secular authority, see, Temporal power
Secular government, 236f, 251, 253
indispensable, 236
See, Authority,
Secular law, 231, 234, 238, 250f
Uses of, 233, 235
Self-will, 110
Sentences of Peter Lombard, 33
Service, of God, 191
of others, 240, 241f, 245
Servum arbitrium, 109
Sickingen, Franz von, 203, 205
Sign of the cross, 296, 318, 377
Simple people, the, see, Common man
Sin
hindrance of, 100
not s. to differ with pope, 94
pope cannot remit penalty for, 41
remains in baptized, 25ff
remnant of, really sin, 32
Sins
alien, 254
mortal, 52ff, 78, 102, 106f, 108
public, 53, 78
seen by God and the world, 427
venial, 52, 102
Sixtus IV, 95, 303
Socrates, 310
Solomon, meaning of name, 238
Sophists, 111, 229, 233, 241, 359
Soul
church no power over, 252
not under temporal power, 251, 256
second part of man, 132
Spalatin, George, 9, 119, 123
Spengler, Lazarus, 407
Spirit and flesh, (Two natures), 25ff, 109
Spirit, first part of man, 132, 139
Spiritual body of Christ, Scriptures are, 16
Spiritual government, 236, 238
Spiritual priesthood, 321f
Sponsors, faith and confession of, 20

State, the, 226
Christian serves, in love, 240
duty of, 247
Stationarii, 217
Stein, Wolfgang, 226
Students, university, 203ff
disturbances by, 203ff
Subjects, duty of, 269f
Sword,
Christians may bear, 241
divinely appointed, 231f
example of Christ, 246
New Testament basis for Christian use of, 243f
Old Testament basis for Christian use of, 242
the power of, 228, 231f, 234, 236, 238, 242f
uses of, 233
Syllogism, Luther's, 392
Sylvester Mazolini (Prierias), 343f

TABERNACLE, THE, figure of the Christian man, 133
Tatian, 386
Tauler, John, 111
Teaching, evil, 299
Temple, building of, 238f
Temporal obedience, 256
Temporal power, 174f, 210, 226, 230ff
cannot prescribe laws for soul, 251, 256
is of God, 231
of the Church, 225, 229
See also, Authority, Law, Ordinance, Secular
Temporal
Administration of law, 263f
duty of, 262
lords, 255, 257f, 260f, 263
princes (pope *et al*), 254f
Tertullian, 247
Tetzel, John, 7
Teutonic Order, the, 405ff, 410ff
dread of, 411
its unique purpose, 410
wealth, 411
Theban Legion, 244
Theses, XCV, Luther's explanation and defense, 7
recantation demanded, 7
Thomas Aquinas, see Aquinas
Three parts to man, 132f
illustration of this, 133
Tinder of original sin, 36
Tolerance, 220
Tradition, 338ff
True believers, 234

Tudeschi, Nicholas, 96
Tübingen, 277
Turk, on war against the, 105f
Two kinds, 254
Two natures in man, see, Flesh and spirit
Types, of the Old Testament, 24
present, 24

ULRICH, ST, 386
Unbelief, a terrible sin, 21
Unbelievers, 248

VESPERS, 125
Vicar of Christ, see Pope
Virgin birth, the, 130, 195
Virgin Mary, the, see, Our Lady
Virtues, cardinal, 144
See, Humility
Volta, Gabriel della, 7
Volusian, Prince, 228
Votum sacramenti, 60, 72
Vows, monastic, 315, 424
Vulgate, readings or references, 14, 18, 25, 26, 56, 85, 108, 127, 134, 137, 140, 144, 145, 146, 147, 155, 158, 159, 161, 179, 186, 187, 188, 209, 212, 217, 219, 221, 261, 303, 318, 327

WALTHERS, JEROME, 387
War, 175, 268
Wartburg, 120, 203, 225
Weak, consideration for, 219ff
Weimar, 226
Wicliff, John, 98
Will, see, Freedom of
Wittenberg, 119, 203, 204, 208, 225
Word, the, 204, 207, 214, 246, 251, 259, 260, 261, 262
Words of Institution, 68, 69
Works, 67, 134f, 233
done in love, 263
human, 143
self-chosen, 134
See also, God
Worms, 119
Diet, 204, 225

ZACK, JOHN, 277, 283

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis

1:	419
1:26	257
2:	419
2:18	412, 413, 415, 423
2:24	353
3:7	148
3:15	26
3:17f	193
4:4f	100, 154
4:10ff	304
4:14f	231
6:3	109
8:21	109
9:6	232
11:1f	104
12:3	193
14:14ff	270
14:15	242
15:6	20
19:17	426
19:26	426
20:6	270
22:18	193
25:17	159
32:24ff	192
32:28	193

Exodus

9:16	189
13:18	38
20:1ff	354
20:5f	167
20:12	423
21:13	270
21:14	232
21:23ff	232
24:12	354
26:30ff	133
30:25ff	165
31:18	354
32:28	211

	34:7	312
	34:33ff	357
	40:1ff	133
Leviticus		
	11:6	347
	11:7	347
	26:36	207
Numbers		
	11:4ff	143
	22:28	14, 266
	23:19	33
	25:7ff	211
	34:1f	297
	35:12	270
Deuteronomy		
	4:2	367
	12:32	380
	16:20	212
	20:10ff	269
	28:23	207
	28:65	39
	28:65-7	207
	32:21	294
	32:35	212
	32:39	361
Joshua		
	7:1ff	106
Judges		
	15:11	249
	16:30	304
	20:12ff	106
I Samuel		
	2:5	187
	2:6ff	361
	2:9	163
	15:33	242
	17:7	325
	29:9	124
II Samuel		
	3:27	268
	7:5ff	238
	15:25f	142
	16:28	267
	19:10ff	428
	20:8	325
	20:10	268, 325
I Kings		
	2:5f	268
	3:5-14	121
	3:9	264
	5:17ff	238

6:7 239
17:6 187
17:15 187
18:27 331, 383
18:40 211, 242

II Chronicles
19:4ff 266

Esther
14:16 148

Job
9:3 101
9:15 101
9:21 107
9:28 107
22:29 147
26:11 415
32:19 328
40:15f 170, 231, 292
41:1ff 170
41:15 424
41:27 260

Psalms
2:2 184
2:5 39
2:6 234
6:2f 39
7:2 170
7:8 253
7:9 186, 253
7:11 186
10:7 360
10:12ff 214
10:15 208
14:5 207
14:6 14
18:28 334
19:12 30, 52, 54, 64, 67, 107
21:6 129
22:21 170
28:5 188
32:8 145
34:8 131
34:10 187
36:2 207
37:25 187
37:35f 179
45:17 129
49:18 137, 140
51:10 29, 132
58:4 170
66:12 112

68 : 6 134
73 : 16ff 179
74 : 13 170
76 : 5 186
78 : 37 132
82 : 6 124
89 : 32 41, 77
91 : 5 39
105 : 37 38
107 : 40 261
110 : 2 318, 352
110 : 3 239, 351
111 : 2 188
111 : 7 33, 188
112 : 7 39
113 : 5f 127
113 : 6 149
113 : 7 361
115 : 16 256
116 : 10 145
116 : 11 338
119 : 86 33
119 : 105 334
119 : 140 161
119 : 171 161
131 : 1 147
133 : 1 134
138 : 6 14, 127
143 : 2 52, 65, 99, 100, 102, 107, 300
147 : 15 302
150 : 1 339

Proverbs
14 : 23 393
16 : 2 186
20 : 22 250
21 : 1 124
24 : 29 250
25 : 6 144
27 : 14 160
28 : 1 39, 80, 207
28 : 16 263
30 : 13 128

Ecclesiastes
7 : 20 99
10 : 16 264
19 : 14 14

Song of Solomon
2 : 2 318

Isaiah
2 : 4 103, 239
3 : 4 258

11:1f	130
11:4	208, 260
11:6f	103
11:9	239
30:21	141
33:11	318
41:3	49
47:8f	189
48:9-10	58
49:8	427
53:1	177
53:2ff	177
53:4	75
55:9	390
66:1f	316
66:2	395

Jeremiah

5:3	170
5:4	15
6:14	17
8:11	17
9:23f	150, 168
17:9f	253
18:18	13
19:5	369
23:21	359
23:21f	367
23:32	367
30:11	254
48:29f	170
51:34	124
59:2	100
64:6	99

Ezekiel

13:10	17
13:16	17
14:9	366
14:21	124

Daniel

3:55	127
8:23	365
8:23ff	365
8:24f	376
8:25	208, 215
9:27	376, 388
11:37	413, 423
11:37f	369

Hosea

4:15	360
13:11	258

Joel
3:10 178
Amos
7:16 360
9:8 254
Micah
2:9 107
Nahum
1:3 49
Habakkuk
1:16 184
2:4 19
3:4 178
Zephaniah
3:3 124
Zechariah
12:4 145
Malachi
2:7 367

OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

Wisdom
4:16 85
19:7 88
Ecclesiasticus
32:6 219
34:12ff 111
Prayer of Manasseh
5:5 58
II Maccabees
12:43 113

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew
3:1ff 361
3:2 234
3:29 112
4:4 375
5:13f 352
5:15 15
5:17 40
5:18 40, 207
5:19 233
5:22 31
5:25 228, 374
5:25ff 233
5:29 148, 180
5:34ff 249
5:38f 233, 248
5:39 225, 228, 235, 238, 240, 241, 248, 376
5:40 228, 241
5:44 233, 248

5:48 248
6:7 160
6:9f 30
6:33 234
7:3 213
7:3ff 424
7:6 219
7:15 152, 365
7:17 100
7:18 235
7:21 222
7:22 297
7:23 297
7:26f 98
8:8 59
9:2 18, 40, 56
10:24 292
10:25 292
10:28 252
10:34 302
10:34f 204
11:17 331
11:18 293
11:19 181
11:22f 418
12:32 112
12:34 214
13:29f 175
13:33 30
13:43 18
13:58 18
15:3ff 326
15:8 364
15:14 293
16:18 82, 83, 216, 251, 280, 398
16:19 22, 48, 50, 51, 55, 57, 89, 341
17:20 137
17:27 240
18:6 358
18:9 148
20:11f 153
20:15 153
21:21 46
21:31 418
22:17 316
22:21 256
23:1f 297
23:2 367
23:8 218
23:10 92
23:33 219
24:5 76

24:15 21, 92, 108, 364, 376
24:23 369
24:23f 364
24:24 76, 92, 367, 368
24:35 207
24:45ff 322
26:26 22, 68
26:52 232
27:29 330

Mark

9:23 137
11:24 18
14:22ff 68
15:34 217
15:37 217
16:16 19, 21, 60, 61

Luke

1:28f 49, 156
1:29 148, 162
1:46-55 126
2:34 303
3:1 378
3:7 181, 351
3:14 232, 243
4:25 14
6:21 187
6:41 318
7:50 56
9:54ff 103
10:16 341
10:34f 30
11:15 317
11:20 317
14:7ff 154
14:10 261
16:10 153
16:19ff 184
16:22 194
17:20f 395
17:31f 426
18:11 220
22:15 302
22:19f 68, 73
22:25 263
24:34f 152
24:39 16

John

1:14 195
1:29 361
3:6 395
3:20 267

3:21 267
4:24 160
5:17 164
6:26 140
6:29 339
6:51 75
6:63 423
7:16 218
7:49 220
8:11 40
8:33ff 108
8:48 293
10:1 342
10:5 251
10:8 342
10:27 251
11:49 301
12:24 304
14:6 324
14:26 340
15:3 29
15:9 29
15:20 292, 313
16:2 103
16:11 428
18:28 104
18:36f 234
20:27 15
20:31 339
21:15f 85
21:20ff 422
21:21f 151
21:22 426
21:25 93, 339, 340

Acts

1:21ff 88
5:29 257, 270
5:41 257
6:13 316
7:48 395
7:48f 316
7:52 104
8:14 88
8:30ff 244
8:36f 19
9:3ff 49
10:34ff 244
10:44 244
13:10f 219
13:12 244
15:8 253

15:9 66
15:11 24
15:12 152
16:3 221
17:20 218
18:28ff 17
20:17 323
20:18 323
20:28 323

Romans

1:17 19
1:28 254
3:19 107
3:20 357
3:24ff 35, 58
4:3 20
5:1 66
5:12ff 45
5:15ff 58
6:12 26
6:23 159
7:7 25, 32, 235, 357
7:9 357
7:12 361
7:14 348
7:14ff 34
7:18f 25
7:22f 26, 28
7:25 27, 32
8:1 34
8:2 94
8:2ff 356
8:13 28
8:28 80
10:10 20
10:17 262
11:32 357
12:8 124
12:10 166, 261
12:11 161
12:16 128
12:19 212, 225, 228, 233
13:1 245, 255
13:1f 211, 231, 239, 244
13:3 236
13:4 245, 256
13:7 256
14:1ff 218, 219
14:15 221
14:23 43, 66, 108

14:28 19
15:1 218, 219
16:18 190

I Corinthians

1:27f 145
1:28 184
1:29 146
3:4f 218
3:7 184
3:8 151
3:12 372
3:13ff 112
4:1 322
4:3f 218
4:4 64, 67, 300
6:12 77
7:7 413
7:19 243
7:28 423
9:27 28
10:1ff 196
10:3f 24
10:4 84
10:17 69
11:23ff 69
11:26 70
11:27 70
11:28 67, 70
11:29 70
11:31 41
11:38f 77
12:13 243
14:2 352
15:56 45

II Corinthians

1:3 11
1:12 311
3:3ff 354
3:5 163
3:6 94, 346, 347, 353, 356, 362, 363
3:7 357
3:13 357
3:17 362
3:18 31
4:3 416
4:13 24
6:1 427
6:2 427
6:3 213
10:4 259

10:17 150
10:18 64
11:23 322

Galatians
1:8 68, 79, 96, 304, 366
1:18 378, 379
2:1 379
2:3 221
3:1 33
3:10 380
3:17f 193
3:19 235
3:21f 45
3:22 357
3:24 235
4:22 346, 353
4:24 347, 352
5:17 25
5:18ff 29
5:24 26
6:15 48, 243

Ephesians
1:11 163
3:20 164
4:4f 89, 98
4:5 62, 63, 196
4:19 30
5:21 240
5:26 37
5:32 353
6:11ff 310
6:12 260
6:16 312, 315

Philippians
1:6 12
1:15 296
1:15f 60
2:21 298
3:2 351
3:19 190
3:20 396
4:12 140

Colossians
2:7f 366
2:8 92, 365
2:20 365
3:5 28

I Thessalonians
2:16 207
5:3 209
5:21 16, 335
5:23 132

II Thessalonians
2:3 76, 108, 364, 376, 388
2:3f 368
2:4 79
2:8 208, 209, 215, 217
2:9 85, 364
2:10 111
2:10f 214
2:11 303

I Timothy
1:9 235, 362
1:19 234
4:1 44, 45
4:1ff 92, 385
4:3 317, 382
4:4 245

II Timothy
2:24 322
2:25 108
3:5 366
3:7 360, 366
3:9 421

Titus
1:5 323
1:7f 323
1:9 335
1:10 219
1:13 219
2:14 191

Hebrews
5:1 327
9: 349
10: 349
10:38 19
11:1 397
12:1 29
12:3 313
13:8 196

James
1:5ff 18
1:18 30

I Peter
2:5 84
2:9 192, 280, 319, 351
2:11 26
2:12 221
2:13f 211, 231, 239, 255, 256
2:14 233, 236
2:15 214
3:9 233
3:15 220

	3:16	214, 220
	4:11	252
	4:14	257
	4:15	311
	4:16	257, 311
	5:1ff	322
	5:5	128, 261, 322
	5:9	84
II Peter		
	2:1	93, 110
	2:3	397
	3:13	37
I John		
	1:8	29
	1:10	32
	4:18	39
Revelation		
	1:16	208
	3:20	49
	12:9	266
	17:8	79

SCHEELE MEMORIAL LIBRARY
3 6655 00101054 4

BR
330 Luther, Martin
.E5 Works of Martin Luther.
1915
Vol.III

DATE DUE

BR
330 Luther, Martin
.E5 Works of Martin Luther.
1915
Vol.III

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME
APR 16 1985	[illegible]
APR 09 '91	Langsch 1361
7-5-95	ILL SUNY Oswego

Concordia College Library
Bronxville, NY 10708